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LOCAL EXAMINATIONS in MUSIC of the Associated Board of the Royal Academy of Music and the Royal College of Music.
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N.B.—In consideration of the shortness of time for preparation, Candidates who pass the PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION on February 19th, 1890, may present themselves for examination in their selected subject or subjects either in 1890 or 1891 without further fee.
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* * All advertisements for the current week's issue should be lodged with the Printer not later than noon Thursday.

* * MSS. and Letters intended for publication must be addressed to THE EDITOR. Rejected MSS. cannot be returned unless accompanied by stamped directed envelope.

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The Musical World.

LONDON, SATURDAY, DECEMBER 21, 1889.

FACTS AND COMMENTS.

We believe that no reader of "THE MUSICAL WORLD" will require from us any apology for the inclusion in our portrait gallery of the great poet whose loss the world is mourning. Robert Browning was one of those men whose fame is the property not of one, but of all classes; but musicians—as was shown in the articles on "Robert Browning, Teacher of Music," which appeared in our columns a few months ago—have special right to consider him as one of themselves, by virtue of his close sympathy and keen intelligence of their art. And he was much more than this. For he lived his life so fully, and employed every faculty of appreciation so completely, that the greatest artists of every kind may be proud to claim a kinship with him.

A meeting was held last week at Messrs. Collard's Rooms for the purpose of establishing in Great Britain a society similar to *The Société des Auteurs et Compositeurs* of France. A contemporary—who, by the way, describes the meeting as strictly private—asserts that "despite the opposition of one or two firms, it is apparent that the creative and executant intelligence of the country is firmly resolved to be paid fair wages for fair work," and names, as among those who support the scheme, Messrs. Chappell, Hopwood and Crew, Robert Cocks, Novello, Ewer, and Co., Patey and Willis, Lafleur, and Stanley Lucas; while the authors and composers include Messrs. F. C. Burnand, Clifton Bingham, Sutherland Edwards, W. S. Gilbert, George Grossmith, B. C. Stephenson, F. E. Weatherley, Luigi Arditi, Frederic Cowen, Alfred Cellier, G. Jacobi, E. Jakobowski, Tito Mattei, J. L. Roeckel, C. Villiers Stanford, Edward Solomon, Paolo Tosti, Goring Thomas, and Miss Hope Temple. Mr. Ashdown was in the chair, and the result was the appointment of a provisional committee, consisting of three authors, three composers, and three publishers, with, it is almost superfluous to say, Mr. Alfred Moul as secretary. We heartily wish the new undertaking success—its aim is perfectly legitimate and praiseworthy. But, unless we have sadly overestimated the practical shrewdness of our countrymen (and women) the immediate gainers will be, not the authors and composers whose cause Mr. Moul so bravely and so self-sacrificingly champions, but the "one or two firms" who announce that all works published by them "may be sung in public without fee." It requires but little penetration to see that by this move the firms in question obtain an enormous advantage over those publishers who favour Mr. Moul's new venture. This of course is very wrong and wicked of them, and by and by, no doubt, the persuasive eloquence of Mr. Moul will convince them of the error of their ways, persuade them to forego their advantages, and induce them to enter the fold of which he is to be shepherd. Meanwhile it does not seem to strike any one that as long as such rivalry exists the frequency of a work's performance will depend more on its cheapness than on its merit—which, from the point of view of Art, is not a pleasant prospect.

A Guild of Musicians has been formed at New Orleans within the past year which is rapidly attaining importance and attracting the attention of musicians in Boston and other American cities. It was first inaugurated by Miss Mary Wilson, of N.O., and other leading musicians, and is being noticed and encouraged by some prominent newspapers. At the moment we are unable to say more than that the movement is growing so rapidly that our hearty wishes for its success seem likely to be fulfilled.

The prospectus of the second half of the present series of Crystal Palace concerts has been issued, and offers promise of considerable interest. The new works announced include concert overtures by C. A. Coultery and Goldmark, and a Symphony in A by Frederic Lamond, while the artists new to Palace audiences are Mdlle. Amelia Sinico, Madame Backer Gröndahl—who appears on March 1st, playing Grieg's Concerto—and Mr. Durward Lely. At the second concert, on Feb. 15, Rossenheim's Concerto for pianoforte will be played; while Hamish MacCunn's cantata, "Bonny Kilmeny" will be given on March 8th, not, as announced in the programme, for the first time in England, the Streatham Choral Society having led the way with their performance on Thursday last. Beethoven's "Mount of Olives," Mozart's "Linz" Symphony, and overture to "Idomeneo," with the ending for concert use by Carl Reinecke, are also among the important works promised.

Mr. Henry F. Frost having resigned his position in the Hyde Park Academy of Music owing to his many literary engagements, Mrs. Trickett, who has conducted the institution since the death of her sister, Madam Sainton-Dolby, has entered into partnership with Mr. F. Gilbert Webb. As this gentleman has already added the names of such musical celebrities as Miss Anna Lang, Miss Ehrenberg, Miss Helen Meason, Mr. Max Heinrich, Mr. Herbert Sims Reeves, and Mr. Schönberger to the staff of professors, it is evident that the high reputation this academy has obtained for thorough and artistic musical training will be fully maintained. We gather also from the prospectus that the newer methods of teaching whereby the time and patience alike of master and pupil are considerably economised, and artistic results more assured, will be freely adopted. Musical academies abound, but there is undoubtedly still room for a high class institution chiefly intended for lady amateur vocalists and instrumentalists.

* *

The Annual Conference of the National Society of Professional Musicians will be opened at Bristol on Jan. 7. The programme contains many features of interest, such as the address to be given by Mr. Prout on "The Study of Counterpoint," and that by Mr. T. Spencer Curwen on "The Elementary Musical Education of the People." The Presidents of the Conference are Dr. A. C. Mackenzie, Dr. W. H. Longhurst, and Dr. E. J. Hopkins.

* *

The great Chicago Auditorium—the largest building of its kind in the world—was inaugurated on December 9th. The ceremony was of the most imposing kind, and the musical programme contained a solo by Madame Patti and an ode specially written for the occasion by Harriett Monroe and composed by Frederic Grant Reason. On the following evening a series of operatic performances began, including "Otello," "Romeo and Juliet," "Lakme," and "Mefistofele."

* *

The death is announced from the United States of Carl Formes, the once famous bass singer, who was born at Mühlheim-on-the-Rhine, August 7, 1810. He made his first appearance on the stage at Cologne in 1842, and was heard in 1849 in London at Drury Lane, as Sarastro in "Die Zauberflöte." A year later he joined the company at Covent Garden, appearing first as Caspar in "Der Freischütz." He did not confine himself, however, to the operatic stage, and as the Elijah of Mendelssohn's oratorio was wont to sing with superb dignity and power. Since 1857 Formes resided chiefly in America, although he has visited England once or twice since. In the season of 1888 he appeared at the Crystal Palace.

* *

Death has severed another link with a great past epoch by the removal of Charlotte, widow of Ignaz Moscheles, who died at Detmold on the 13th inst., aged 84. The deceased lady was certainly in the musical world, if not of it; and the same may be said of the Marquis de Caux, first husband of Madame Patti, who has also died within the last few days.

* *

After the distribution of prizes in connection with the Royal Polytechnic Miss Meredyth Elliott had the honour of being introduced to Her Royal Highness the Duchess of Albany, who expressed her delight with Miss Elliott's fine and sympathetic rendering of various songs.

We have received from Messrs. Macmillan "Flowers of Paradise," a book of verse, music, and design by Reginald Francis Hallward. It appears primarily intended for children, but though the verses and their musical settings are sufficiently simple and pretty, the designs and illustrations are on a far higher level of imagination and poetic value than any usually attained to by children. This is hardly to be imputed as a fault, however, for the book is informed throughout with such charm and grace that it should find a very large audience indeed amongst those to whom these qualities appeal.

* *

Mrs. Ford, in Nicolai's charming opera, "The Merry Wives of Windsor," and Kate in Götz's "Taming of the Shrew," were the greatest successes of Madame Minnie Hauk's recent operatic tour in Germany, drawing crowded audiences, notably at Leipzig. It will be remembered that this distinguished artist created Kate in Götz's opera at Her Majesty's Theatre in 1887.

* *

From the balance-sheet of the last Leeds Festival, which has just been issued, it appears that, after the payment of all expenses, a balance remained of £3,142 16s. Of this satisfactorily large sum, £2,357 2s. has been divided between the three principal charities of Leeds in the following proportion: General Infirmary, £1,532 2s. 3d.; Public Dispensary, £471 8s. 5d.; and Hospital for Women and Children, £353 11s. 4d.

* *

We have received from the Soden Mineral Produce Company, 52, Bread-street, Cheapside, a sample box of the Soden Mineral Pastilles, which are specially intended for the alleviation of all bronchial affections. Experience is the only safe guide in judging of their value, and, as far as we have had opportunity of observing their effects, the pastilles seem admirably adapted for their purpose, allaying irritation of the throat, as well as more serious troubles, with remarkable ease. They are, moreover, of convenient size and palatable flavour.

WAGNER AND HIS WORK.

BY CHARLES DOWDESWELL.

(Continued from page 887.)

The festival at Bayreuth which was recently brought to a conclusion witnessed performances of three of Wagner's later works—"Tristan und Isolde," "Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg," and the Bühnenweihfestspiel, "Parsifal"—eighteen representations in all. The customary conditions associated with performances in this unique theatre were, of course, observed; the auditorium was darkened, the orchestra and its conductor were invisible, while the artists, amongst whom the usual enthusiasm prevailed, were allowed no recalls other than was involved in the raising of the curtain after the close of the last act revealing the final tableau. Taking the representations together they may be said to have been, with one or two exceptions, well nigh as artistic as those given under the personal régime of Wagner, and higher praise than this it would be difficult to accord. The shortcomings were those of former festivals—that is to say, scenery and stage effects which in some instances would not be allowed at the Lyceum Theatre, and the untrue singing of one or two of the actors. The former of these imperfections is the more to be regretted in an artistic organism which theoretically is to contain a *mise en scène* of the highest excellence. The existence of this shortcoming, however, supports the view that the German eye is to some extent deficient in the pictorial sense.

With reference to "Tristan and Isolde" it is interesting to note that Wagner decided upon this famous love story at the suggestion of Ferdinand Praeger at about the same time as he first made the acquaintance of Schopenhauer's philosophy, i.e., towards the end of the year 1854. In a

letter to Liszt of this period he writes:—"Apart from slowly progressing with my music I have of late occupied myself exclusively with a man who has come like a gift from heaven, although only a literary one, into my solitude. This is Arthur Schopenhauer, the greatest philosopher since Kant, whose thoughts, as he himself expresses it, he has thought out to the end. The German professors ignored him very prudently for forty years; but recently, to the disgrace of Germany, he has been discovered by an English critic. All the Hegels, &c., are charlatans by the side of him. His chief idea, the final negation of the desire of life, is terribly serious, but it shows the only salvation possible. To me, of course, that thought was not new, and it can indeed be conceived by no one in whom it did not pre-exist, but this philosopher was the first to place it clearly before me. If I think of the storm of my heart, the terrible tenacity with which, against my desire, it used to cling to the hope of life, and if even now I feel this hurricane within me, I have at least found a quietus which in wakeful nights helps me to sleep. This is the genuine, ardent longing for death, for absolute unconsciousness, total non-existence; freedom from all dreams is our only final salvation." And in the same letter there occurs this passage:—"As I have never in life felt the real bliss of love, I must erect a monument to the most beautiful of all my dreams; in which, from beginning to end, that love shall be thoroughly satiated. I have in my head 'Tristan und Isolde,' the simplest, but most full-blooded musical conception; with the black flag which floats at the end of it I shall cover myself to die."

Some critics have called "Tristan und Isolde" a dramatisation of Schopenhauer's system, but this is an incorrect mode of expression. Wagner gave birth to "Tristan" purely in an artistic manner of production; that is, in that semi-unreflective way which belongs to the instinct of genius. A very indifferent stage representation of this music-drama clearly shows us that. But as he had already thought long and deeply upon the problems of life and destiny; as the bias of his mind had led him to take a tragic view of them; and as he had now with joyful surprise found in Schopenhauer's writings a scientific and philosophic corroboration which strengthened his thought and confirmed his opinions, but which certainly did not form them, his work could not but derive its roots from the general intellectual culture which he had up to this time acquired. If we need any support to the view that before the year 1854 the ethical drift of Wagner's work as an artist was conceived independently to that of Schopenhauer as a philosopher, although it ran in a somewhat similar direction, we have only to bear in mind that the entire poem of "Der Ring des Nibelungen" was completed fully a year before Wagner first opened the pages of Schopenhauer. "Consider well my new poem," Wagner wrote to Liszt on February 11, 1853. "It contains the beginning and the end of the world," and this is no exaggerated characterisation of a drama which opens with the creative spirit moving upon the face of the waters in the prelude to "Das Rheingold," and which ends in "Götterdämmerung" with the downfall of Walhall's gods, followed by the death sacrifice of Brünnhilde on Siegfried's pyre. These two men worked in different fields of thought, yet, unknown to each other, each had conceived and brought to fruition a mental picture of the world—the one a philosophical, the other an artistic picture—which bear a curious relationship the one to the other. That Wagner should have executed the poem of the "Nibelungen" before he knew anything of Schopenhauer is as remarkable a fact as that Schopenhauer should have written the most luminous treatise on the nature of music that was ever penned without knowing anything of the later works of Beethoven. But whereas "Tristan und Isolde" cannot truthfully be said to be a dramatisation of Schopenhauer's system it is evident that Wagner intended the tragedy to illustrate, in a manner entirely subordinate to the supreme claims of strict aesthetics, that surrender to the torrent of impulses which Schopenhauer has defined as "the affirmation of the will to live."

The poem was written in the splendour of Wagner's genius; its poetic qualities are obvious to any competent critic, while the employment of unusual metres was necessitated by the exigencies of the musical setting. The work has been called by so able and independent an authority as Mr. William Archer "one of the greatest poems in the world."* Its philosophical drift is unusually negative even for a tragedy. No hope of personal immortality, no anticipation of a happier dawn illumine it. Night, death, non-existence constitute its goal. It is the most purely pessimistic drama of modern times, and thus the effect produced by this story of two fated lovers around whom Frau Minna has thrown her all-potent

spells is to pierce us through and through with pity and terror. To see this play often would, as in the case of the "Cenci," have an unhealthy effect upon us simply by reason of its transfixing tension. Like the "Nibelungen," "Tristan und Isolde" should rightly speaking be called a "Festival Play," and from one point of view performances of it might be restricted to Bayreuth, as from another point of view should "Parsifal" also.

As to the music, it is on fire from beginning to end; the rapture and the poignancy of its utterance have no parallel elsewhere; so that judging the work as an artistic organism (that is to say, poem and music combined), according to the fundamental laws governing the finest tragedies it must be accounted Richard Wagner's masterpiece. Even "Götterdämmerung" has to give way before it in concentrated tragic force, while "Parsifal," as we shall presently see, strikes out an original path for itself, and cannot therefore be included in any dramatic classification.

An English critic once said that he regretted Wagner had written "Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg" in lieu of another tragedy. This capacity for throwing himself into an entirely different world of thought and mental environment, however, serves to show the range of Wagner's powers, and proves that he was by no means deficient in a genuine sense of humour. "Die Meistersinger" comes under the somewhat arbitrary heading of "comic opera," but this is a misnomer; the work is a comedy set to music which, with all its breadth and grandeur, is still charged with sportiveness, grace, and delicate sentiment—a comedy withal conceived in the true Shakespearean spirit and sense of proportion, and carried out with the Shakespearean authority of touch. Wagner retained the idea in his head for many years, writing the first sketch of it in the same year in which he outlined "Lohengrin," viz., 1845, and putting the last touches to the MS. in 1867. In this work the heroic mood of the master relaxes, and with an unfeigned sympathy for the more ordinary experiences of mankind he leads us back to mediæval Nürnberg, where the guild of Mastersingers, Hans Sachs at its head, keeps alive German poesy and song. The good-natured satire with which he treats this body of pedantic burghers whose artistic insight, with the exception of that of Hans Sachs, does not keep pace with their capacity for formulating artistic rules; the ludicrous figure of Beckmesser, the marker, who must for ever remain the embodiment of garrulous obscurantism; the tender love-thread that is woven into the piece; and, lastly, the grand figure of Hans Sachs, the cobbler poet, who is imbued with artistic penetration and personal generosity—all these traits lift the work into a high place amongst contemporary dramas. Here, with that imperturbable good temper that accompanies a winning cause, Wagner ridicules his own critics, and with shouts of Homeric laughter silences for ever their flouts and jibes.

No one can charge the literary side of Wagner's last work, the sacred play of "Parsifal," with the fault which Voltaire has expressed in the lines, "Le secret d'être ennuyeux c'est de tout dire." It is tinged with an indeterminate, semi-elusive mysticism which practically evades analysis; in other words it is a genuine work of poetic art which with all our thinking about we are unable to bring down to a rational concept, and this is one of the principal causes of the abiding satisfaction which it gives. But if Schopenhauerian terms are to be retained it may be claimed that whereas "Tristan und Isolde" illustrates the affirmation of the will to live, "Parsifal" sets forth its negation, as well as that "peace that passeth understanding" accompanying this reversal. The figure of the "reine Thor" stands as the embodiment, firstly of naïve ignorance, then of heroic self-mastery, and, lastly, of that enlightened altruism which selects him for deeds of world-redeeming import. "Parsifal" is by no means so genuinely dramatic as "Tristan"; the incidents, while more symbolic, are less adapted to the theatre as ordinarily understood; its pathos is more removed, less immediate, less impetuous. What then are the main grounds for the enchainment interest with which it binds us? The quasi-religious aureola radiating from it and the sublimity of the music—these are the secrets of its attraction. The frank paganism of the "Nibelungen," the Nirvana which is the goal of "Tristan" give way here before an aim which is more Christian than Odinic or Buddhistic, and which is thus more related to the Western spirit as it now exists. "Parsifal" has no analogue in the fields of drama; if we examine the mysteries and miracle plays of the middle ages, and the sacred plays and autos of Calderon which the master is known to have studied, we do not derive much help therefrom. Perhaps it may be claimed for "Parsifal" that it is Wagner's most original work.

It has been said of Wagner that he was "a pessimist." The term is an indefinite, elastic, and by no means luminous one which to some ears carries with it a dreadful sound. It is true that his thought bears relationship to the "pessimism" of Gautama Buddha, of Solomon, of Job, and of

* "The World," August 7, 1889.

Schopenhauer; this is manifest throughout all his writings. But the championship of blank negation cannot be alleged against his last work, which probes into the metaphysical essences of things more deeply than either "Tristan" or the "Nibelungen." "Das Schaudern ist der Meuschheit bestes Theil." These wonderful words of Goethe's convey the idea which animates the two great scenes in the temple. This sense of awe which is mankind's best part steals over us as we see the knights enter the hall of Montsalvat, where all ideality and spiritual truth reside, and where the wildest desires of the soul are promised satisfaction. This feeling is strengthened until, as the Holy Grail, glowing with the blood of Christ, is raised on high it seems as though the secret of all religions—Faith, Hope, Love—stood unveiled before us. To those persons who have not been to Bayreuth this may read like meaningless exaggeration; those who have will bear out the statement. The episode is of such beauty and solemnity, and is so instinct with grave significance, that once witnessed it makes itself a dwelling-place in the memory for ever.

If "Parsifal" be not free from the influence of Buddhist philosophy it is not entirely pessimistic, for the life-blood of redemption courses through the veins of the work. The religious "Schaudern" which it succeeds in arousing whispers to the large number of Agnostics who frequent the Bayreuth Festspielhaus an intimation of a possible and an affirmative answer to the greatest of all problems. That Wagner was a man of deep religious feelings in spite of the fact that his religious conceptions did not assume anthropomorphic shape is clear throughout all his writings; but in "Parsifal" it receives signal and final illustration—not exclusively because he has therein incorporated incidents of Christian history and used Christian symbols, but because behind all these we discern that unfathomable world of aspiration which is the common mother of all religions, and the mere existence of which constitutes the best of all arguments in favour of the theory of a future life.

ROBERT BROWNING.

A harder task could not be allotted to any writer who had been brought into personal relations with Robert Browning than that of recording his death. For at the moment of such a duty the sense of the heavy loss to the world of art may well be overbalanced by the acuter pain, never to be assuaged, at the death of one whose friendship was an accurate and lasting symbol of nobility, truth, and sweetness. There would surely have been full excuse if the long delay of general appreciation of his works had to any degree embittered the temper of the great poet; but one at least who knew him cannot recollect that ever in the course of many conversations ranging over many persons and things he spoke one word of reproach or bitterness against his assailants. And it cannot with justice be held that his death, at the advanced age of seventy-seven, occasions so wide a gap in the ranks of literature as in those circles of society which knew him best, since no form of circumstance can alienate from the empire of English art those works which are amongst the most precious of her crown jewels; it is the memory of gracious words of help, of stimulating encouragement, to which death brings so cruel a severance, and it is for the loss of these that so many now are sorrowing, scarcely to be comforted by any thought of the wider life to which one cannot but believe the great soul to have attained. Yet none can feel that Robert Browning has been taken from us in an untimely fashion. It is hard when a fruitful life is cut off in the spring of its budding, or the summer of its flowering; but he at least had reached the autumn of full fruitage, and has died as he himself would have wished, when his life-work was consummated. For his busy life this was surely the fitting end, and it would not be easy to imagine any more fortunate opportunity of death. Long ago he wrote, in words which his Italy will not soon forget,

"Open my heart, and you will see
Graved inside of it, 'Italy.'
Such lovers old are I and she,"

and it was in that land, hallowed to him beyond measure by the memory of his wife's passionate love of it, that he has died. So, also, it would be hard not to feel the prophetic fitness of his last written words, not to imagine that, in writing those lines which close the book published almost

on the day of his death, he was prescient of the nighness of a day when they might serve alike for his own farewell and epitaph.

"At the midnight, in the silence of the sleep-time,

When you set your fancies free,

Will they turn to where—by death, fools think, imprisoned—

Low he lies who once so loved you, whom you loved so,

—Pity me?"

One who never turned his back, but marched breast forward,

Never doubted clouds would break,

Never dreamed, though right were worsted, wrong would triumph,

Held we fall to rise, are baffled to fight better,

Sleep to wake."

It seems scarcely necessary to the present purpose to offer many details of the great poet's personal history, which, indeed, is singularly barren of external incident. He was born May 7, 1812, at Camberwell, his father holding a high position in the Bank of England. He was educated at University College, London, and at the age of twenty proceeded to Italy, this first visit being followed shortly by the anonymous publication of "Pauline." When it has been said that in 1846 he married Elizabeth Barratt, who three years later gave birth to a son, and died in 1861, the principal events of his life have been recapitulated. For though much may and doubtless will be written about that union, so touching and beautiful an instance of the most perfect union of soul and spirit, this is not the opportunity. Suffice it to say that from their mutual love each drew incessant inspiration and help, and that few more noble poems have been written than that in which the poet-husband invokes the aid of his dead poet-wife, his

"Lyric Love, half angel and half bird,
And all a wonder and a wild desire."

How well his passionate invocation was answered "The Ring and the Book" may clearly show. This great work was published in 1868, "Dramatis Personæ," which included "Rabbi Ben Ezra," "Abt Vogler," and "The Worst of It," having appeared in 1864.

It has been said of Browning that he gave us not books but a literature. The mass of his work is so great, its scope so immeasurably wider than that of any other English poet except Shakspeare, that the term is justly applied. It would be certainly wonderful, therefore, if the work were not often unequal in quality, and, even at this sad moment, there are few who would seek to deny the presence of some great technical blemishes, or to regret that thereby some of his noblest poems must for a long time remain sealed to those for whom their message was so weighty. The causes which prevented him from overcoming these defects lie too deeply hidden in a singularly complex nature for present discovery. An imagination so piercing and vivid, a brain so incessantly active, that the ordinary forms of expression broke down under their stress were probably responsible to a large degree. Two poets only—Shakspeare and Æschylus—have reached and maintained that highest level on which the perfectly balanced control of every artistic quality is achieved, the soul and body of the artist working in perfect harmony. But there are very few who have touched it oftener than did Browning, in such passages, for instance, as the great scene between Ottima and Sebald, in "Pippa Passes," where a phase of terrible passion and spiritual strife is transcribed with that absolute sincerity which belongs only to the supremest art. That he was a dramatist is scarcely to be alleged; and until we have reached greater certainty in our definitions it is perhaps unwise to say that he was dramatic. The language does not, it seems, contain any one word descriptive of that marvellous power—possessed by Browning in the highest degree—of seizing a human soul at the hour of intense emotion, at the crisis of a great struggle, and photographing it in words. It is here that his greatest literary triumphs have been achieved, in the depiction of such characters as "James Lee's Wife," the lover of Evelyn Hope and of "The Worst of It," and, above all, Pompilia, The Pope, and Guido, in "The Ring and the Book." We may grant that Browning was not a successful writer of stage plays, and that he was ignorant of the subtleties of stagecraft; but—heretical as such a suggestion may be—perhaps the greatest tragedies known to literature are those which are performed to the reader alone in his study. There are some phases of human passion which may be watched by a single eye, but it seems indecent that a crowd should be invited to look on at these moments of a soul's nakedness and despair, or even at the rapture of two lovers. There is here, of course, no excuse for the fact that Browning's plays, as such, are failures; but it is at least a reason for

assigning to the dramas of the individual, in whatever form they may be cast, a very high place in literature. In the dramatic form his imagination was hampered and moved uneasily; but his was at times, and often, that vivid insight which Mr. Watts calls "absolute vision." The scene already referred to from "Pippa Passes;" the last lines of the wretched Guido's speech, when, hearing the guards' step, he proclaims the innocence of his angel-wife by his despairing cry,

"Pompilia, will you let them murder me?"

—the ineffable pathos of the lover who, in "The Worst of it," bids his guilty mistress be comforted, for even if he meets her in heaven he will not turn his face, lest she should see him and be reminded of her sin; these are, in varying ways, proof of the supremacy of his power of diagnosing and recording the most acute crises of the soul.

Regarded simply as a poet, the faults of Browning's work may thus be summed. He is unsuccessful as a dramatist; his thoughts are frequently of such fiery condensation that their verbal expression is obscure and difficult of comprehension: that his manner of speech often imposed itself upon his characters; and that his love of curious spiritual analysis led him sometimes to the examination of morbid or uninteresting types. Grave faults, no doubt; yet can they be held worthy of much consideration when we look at the other side of the account? On this page we have presented: a stretch of mental horizon unequalled by any poets besides Shakspeare and Chaucer; profundity of thought; sincerity of passion in its every phase; a rare quality of humour; above all, a pathos more stringent and tear-compelling than that of any English writer. To these we may add a frequent mastery and lucidity of style; a not inconsiderable lyrical gift; and a noble and unfaltering faith in the highest destinies of the soul.

An unfaltering faith—the phrase strikes the keynote of that which it is most important to say of his work. Considered simply as poetry it is great enough to be an abiding monument to his memory, and—"still loftier than the world suspects"—will be accounted greater in the future by those who hold the idea to be of more value than the expression. But there are many for whom Browning has done more than write splendid poetry. He has come to them as a regenerator, a liberator of thought; he has shown them an unsuspected significance in life; he has revealed to them the possibilities of their own souls. Such date the dawn of their deepest spiritual consciousness from the day on which they first read his pages, and know that it was only when guided by the beacon-light of his passionate faith that they have attained those loftiest heights on which the face of truth shines most clearly. It has been in hearing of his voice that the noises of life have grown faint, and the soul has asserted her divine right to the empire of all life. To such as these it will matter little that their master's message was sometimes spoken in doubtful words—they are well content, they have heard enough for their comfort and help. That Browning has meant so much as this to countless men and women, breathless, otherwise, in an atmosphere of doubt and despair, is assuredly his highest title to an immortality of influence, if not of name. Around his grave doubtlessly will stand a splendid crowd of his compeers; but the souls he has enriched and strengthened will stand there too, a larger and more honourable band, a fitting if unseen escort.

It is, therefore, with aspirations re-kindled at the torch which has fallen from his hands that those who loved him should turn from his grave, every gracious memory, every helpful word, adding to the flame. He would choose to be remembered not with vainly sentimental regrets, but with continued endeavour and steadfast striving towards his own ideal. Strength and manliness of life, sincerity of thought and aspiration, are the lessons left by the soul—now, perhaps, wrapped about in attained peace, or busied in other and larger cares; and we may not unfitly imagine the hushed voice to have bidden farewell to life in the words imputed by him to a soul which, in upwardness of endeavour, was kin to his own:

"I have done well, though not all well.

As yet men cannot do without contempt:

'Tis for their good, and therefore fit awhile

That they reject the weak, and scorn the false,

Rather than praise the strong and true in me:

But after, they will know me. If I stoop

Into a dark tremendous sea of cloud,

It is but for a time. I press God's lamp

Close to my breast: its splendour, soon or late,

Will pierce the gloom: I shall emerge one day."

SIDNEY R. THOMPSON.

"LES TROYENS."

BY J. S. SHEDLOCK.

(Concluded from page 845.)

FOURTH ACT.

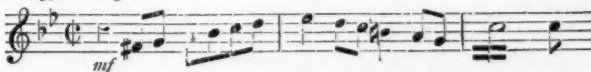
The stage represents the shore of the sea covered with Trojan tents. It is night. Hylas (tenor), a young sailor from the mast of a ship, sings of his country and his home. In the orchestra there is only 1 Fl., 2 Cl., 2 Horns, and 1st and 2nd Celli. In this song, however, for a symphony of eight bars the full orchestra is employed—another of Berlioz' contrasts. The Cl solo at the close, when the sailor falls asleep is charming. It is difficult to conceive anything more quaint and lovely than this air; there is not a note one could wish altered. The opening bars of the melody must serve as a specimen, though a poor one.

Ex. 58. Fl. & Voice.



Panthus arrives on the scene and urges the Trojans to hasten departure. The music here is intensely dramatic as one may see from the introductory bars:—

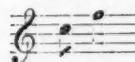
Ex. 59. *Allegro.*



The orchestra throughout expresses energy, and at the same time, anxiety. Angry shades of the dead had appeared the night before crying "Italy." This word is sung three times by singers behind the stage.

A lively, but not particularly remarkable duet for two soldiers may be passed over. Æneas arrives in great agitation: in the accompaniment are the same syncopated phrases which occurred in Panthus' recitative. Later on the

Ex. 60.



from the Panthus scene, and referring to departure, is heard all over the orchestra. The whole of this long scene is dramatically interesting; the accompaniment, with its allusions, more or less distinct, to previous passages, shows how thoroughly Berlioz conceived the functions of the orchestra. Take only one passage. When Æneas speaks of the *reine adorée* we have a reminiscence of the National Hymn. And, by the way, what a wonderful contrast in the music at this moment! But once more we have a sensational episode. There are the spectres of Cassandra, Hector, Choræbus, and Priam, of which that of Priam is alone visible at first. Such an important collection of ghosts demanded evidently something special in the way of orchestration, and Berlioz was equal to the occasion. Let us describe it: four 1st violins give in harmonic sounds chords of dominant or diminished 7ths. A sort of pedal bass note is heard from time to time by horns, bassoons, and some of the double basses tuned down to D. Other mysterious chords are struck by wood-wind, including English horn. The ghosts order immediate departure. Æneas agrees to obey, and to abandon Dido. The following scene between Æneas and chorus is based on the Trojan March; the music, however, changes character when, turning towards the palace of Dido, Æneas bids her farewell, asking pardon, and throwing all blame on the gods. The last number in this act, a duet between Dido and Æneas, is wonderfully interesting. Æneas, like Tannhäuser from Venus, escapes from Dido, and when he ejaculates *Je pars et je vous aime*, she is not far wrong when she answers, *Monstre de pitié! Va donc! va! je maudis et les dieux et toi même.* Æneas reminds her of the divine command. At that moment the Trojan March is heard in the distance. Dido shudders at the sound.

We hear the departure phrase and the Fate chords. Groups of Trojan soldiers pass over the stage going towards the ships, and the music grows louder and more brilliant till the close of the act.

The autograph score has the following note:—*On peut supprimer le Duo des Soldats, dont la familiarité un peu grossière produit un contraste si tranché avec le chant mélancolique du matelot qui le précède et l'air passionné d'Énée qui le suit. On a trouvé en France que le mélange du*

genre tragique et du genre comique était dangereux et même insupportable au theatre, comme si l'opera Don Giovanni n'était pas un admirable exemple du bon effet produit par ce melange, comme si une foule de drames journallement representés à Paris n'offrait pas aussi d'excellentes applications de ce système, comme si enfin Shakespeare n'était pas là. Il est vrai que pour la plupart des Français Shakespeare n'est pas même autant que le soleil pour des taupes; car les taupes peuvent ressentir au moins la chaleur du soleil. J'indique donc encore cette coupure en songeant au bonheur qu'éprouvent les directeurs, acteurs et chefs-d'orchestre, pompiers, machinistes et lampistes à insulter un auteur et à dégrader son œuvre. Je serais fâché de ne pas faciliter autant qu'il est en moi la satisfaction d'aussi nobles instincts.*

(To be continued.)

MUSIC IN EDINBURGH.

During the past week two events musically of more than average importance have transpired here: the one, a first hearing, in Scotland, of Joseph Rheinberger's "St. Christopher" cantata; and the other, the production of Dr. Mackenzie's latest work: an orchestral and choral setting of Burns' well-known descriptive poem—"The Cotter's Saturday Night." It was to Mr. Kirkhope and his admirable choir, supported by a small orchestra of local musicians, that we were indebted for the resuscitation of the neglected, though unquestionably meritorious, "Christopher," while the production of "The Cotter's Saturday Night" took place last evening under the direction of the composer, and with the assistance of the Choral Union, at Messrs. Paterson's Second Orchestral Concert. After hearing Rheinberger's beautiful work—full as it is of dramatic effects and impressive orchestral colouring—and rendered as it was by Mr. Kirkhope's choir the other night, it is difficult to understand why it should have hitherto been so infrequently performed in this country. Its choruses—which are agreeably written for the voice, and present few difficulties of execution—are the most striking features of the work. Those set to the words, "This cup of Satan" and "Love, mighty love," may be particularised as being peculiarly telling. The cantata, as a whole, may be described as semi-sacred in character; while the general tone and feeling of the music is suggestive of Brahms. The earlier and larger portion of the work partakes more distinctly of the secular element; but in the final choruses are to be found several examples of an uncompromisingly religious type. Of the merits of "The Cotter's Saturday Night," which was heard for the first time but a few hours ago, it is not easy to speak. Like all Dr. Mackenzie's work, and that of some others who take a similarly serious view of their obligations to art, it requires much more than a single hearing to disclose all it contains; and therefore any opinions that may be now expressed regarding it must be held to be subject to modification and revision, on fuller and more intimate acquaintance. It may, however, be at once recorded that the work was received with every show of favour and appreciation by a large and enthusiastic audience which filled every available seat in the hall; and that both orchestra and chorus did their best to afford it a worthy interpretation. What strikes one chiefly on a first hearing is the stern and sober aspect of the music as a whole, and its melodic restraint. But this, bearing in mind the sombre character of the poem to which it is wedded, is only what is to a great extent appropriate. It is only in relation to the incident of Jenny and her lover that there is a decided excursion into the lighter and more tuneful field of composition; and the apostrophe to Jenny, "O happy live," affords a glimpse of the composer in his best and most pleasing mood. The "leading theme" has to some extent been resorted to, and in one case it is employed to give a distinctly national turn to the composition. This is in the use of the familiar air, "The Shepherd's Wife," in connection with the "Neebor Lad." But the tendency to nationalisation is only limited, and is principally to be detected

* The soldiers' duet, the somewhat coarse familiarity of which produces such a marked contrast with the melancholy song of the sailor which precedes it, and the passionate air of *Æneas* which follows it may be suppressed. In France the mixture of tragic and comic has been considered dangerous and even intolerable at the theatre, as if forsooth the opera of "Don Giovanni" did not furnish an admirable instance of the good effect produced by this mixture, as if a heap of dramas performed daily at Paris did not offer excellent applications of this system, as if indeed we had not Shakespeare. It is true that for most Frenchmen Shakespeare is not so much as the sun for moles, for moles can at any rate feel the heat of the sun. I indicate then this cut, thinking of the happiness which directors, actors and conductors, firemen, machinists, and lampists will feel in insulting an author and in degrading his work. I should be sorry not to facilitate by all means in my power the satisfaction of such noble instincts.

in the general spirit which pervades the work as a whole, and not in particular instances. Here and there a few notes of well-known psalm tunes, such as "Martyrs" and "Dundee," make their appearance; but the themes are no more than hinted at, and the use thus made of them is but of the nature of suggestive reminiscences and nothing more. The orchestration is good throughout, and in many places some excellent effects are obtained. Speaking generally, although the work may not in all respects reach the standard attained by some of Dr. Mackenzie's previous compositions of a similar kind, he may nevertheless be congratulated on having in this his latest effort scored a genuine success. As the work is shortly to be heard in London, it would seem desirable, at the present time at least, not to carry criticism further. Dr. Mackenzie's work was followed in the same concert by Dr. Stanford's "Revenge," which was also, as an old favourite, warmly received.

The following selections were played at Sir Herbert Oakeley's two last organ recitals, at Edinburgh University:—

Recital 194:—(1.) Overture, "Solomon" (Handel); (2.) *a* Chorus, "Sei uns gnädig" (The Seasons) and *b* Minuet and Trio, in C, (Haydn); (3.) Lied, "Die Ehre Gottes aus der Natur," (Beethoven); (4.) Andante con moto, Organ Fantasia, Op. 25 (Berens); (5.) Two "Songs without Words" (No. 1 and No. 3) Bk. 4 (Mendelssohn); (6.) *Machtstück*, in F, No. 4, Op. 23 (Schumann); (7.) Gavotte, Violoncello Sonata (Bach); (8.) March, in D major (Mozart). Recital 195:—(1.) *a* Prelude and *b* Fugue, in Major (Bach); (2.) Air, with 5 variations (Suite, No. V. (known as "The Harmonious Blacksmith") (Handel); (3.) Pastorale, for Organ (Merkel); (4.) Motett, "Insane et vana cures" (Haydn); (5.) Andante Religioso, "In the Cathedral" (Faust) (Spohr); (6.) Lied, "Ave Maria" (Schubert); (7.) *Wanderbilder* (*a*) No. 1, "Morning Greeting," (*b*) No. 7, "Evening Stillness," Op. 17 (Jensen); (8.) Festival March, "Edinburgh" (Oakeley).

MUSIC IN BRIGHTON.

(BY OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.)

On Thursday evening, the 12th inst., the Brighton and Hove Choral and Orchestral Society gave its Winter Invitation Concert at the Hove Town Hall. The spacious building was crowded by a fashionable audience, an attractive programme having been announced, the principal feature of which was the first public performance of a new oratorio by Dr. Sawyer, the talented conductor of the society. This work, entitled "The Star in the East," contains some numbers from a previous oratorio published as "Saint Mary" five years ago. Dr. Sawyer has wisely recast the whole, and although he has removed some scholarly and pleasing numbers the new work as now presented is a great improvement. The prefatory remarks in the annotated programme state: "The advent of 'The Star in the East, The Light to Lighten the Gentiles,' is treated in four scenes:—The Annunciation (the words taken from Longfellow's 'Golden Legend'), the scene between S. Mary and S. Elizabeth, the Nativity, and the Epiphany, or the Coming of the Magi. The words are partly selected from various poetic sources, and are partly original." The first scene opens with a bold orchestral prelude, containing many effective passages, leading to a chorale (*Wie schön leuchtet*). Then follows the recitative, "O comfort ye," and a *scena*, between the Angel Gabriel and S. Mary. The next number—in some respects the "gem" of the work—is an "Ave Maria" for tenor. In this, by contrast to the previous dramatic colouring, the composer has produced a work of art. Delicately accompanied by the harp and orchestra, an *aria* full of reposeful melody and clothed with choicest harmonies is presented. The chorus then asks the question, "Say, who shall be this wondrous child?" to which the contralto replies in an arietta, "Poor and despaired," the beauty of which lies in its simplicity—especially pleasing are the phrases allotted to the solo instruments in its accompaniment. Scene II. opens with a short but effective prelude for orchestra, introducing a dialogue between S. Mary and S. Elizabeth, after which is an aria, "My soul and spirit," for soprano, and in this, perhaps, the powers of the vocalist are tried more than in any of the other numbers, at the same time being afforded excellent scope for the display of artistic vocalisation. A grand chorus, "Swift fly the years," immediately follows, and in this Dr. Sawyer has shown himself at his best. The third scene is introduced with a quaintly written *pastorelle*. A tenor recitative leads to a semi-chorus "Glory to God," in the accompaniment of which the harp forms an important addition. The chorus, "Hark, the herald

angels sing," is a specimen of scholarly writing. An *allegro agitato* opens the fourth scene, followed by a soprano solo, "Dark is the night." This highly dramatic opening leads to a most reposeful lullaby, "Sleep, holy Babe," very effectively accompanied by two flutes, a solo violin, and a bassoon. Succeeding this is a chorus of angels, "Sleep in Peace"—a short but decidedly pleasing number. The March of the Magi, composed in the Phrygian mode, is very cleverly written, and contains a semi-chorus for male voices, leading to a "trio of adoration," "Lowly we bend." The final chorus, "O, Christ, Thou Star Divine," forms a splendid conclusion to what may justly be styled "a work of art." A bold theme, well developed, makes this chorus interesting from beginning to end.

The orchestration throughout is interesting, and in many instances most effective, and although the "Star in the East" is a scholarly production it contains many points that should appeal to the masses. We need hardly say that the performance of the work was in every respect most satisfactory, the chorus and band acquitting themselves in their usual excellent form, while the solos, which were entrusted to Mmes. A. Link (who appeared for the first time before an English audience), Joyce Maas, and Mr. Edward Branscombe, were most tastefully and carefully rendered, and were in every instance received with unanimous applause. The remaining items of the programme included Brahms' noble work, the "Song of Destiny," too well known to need comment; Ancient and Modern Dances for Orchestra illustrating the use of dance music from the time of Purcell to that of Rubenstein; "Love wakes and sleeps," an exquisitely written madrigal by Mr. F. J. Read; the Jewel Song from "Faust," tastefully sung by Mme. Link; and Alard's Duo Concertante for two violins, splendidly rendered by Messrs. Gray and Crapps, two rising young artists. Dr. Sawyer (who justly holds the premier position in Brighton as a conductor) carried out his arduous duties in his usual able and spirited manner, keeping both chorus and band well under command, thereby contributing in no mean degree to the success of the concert.

On Saturday last, in the Banqueting Room, Royal Pavilion, Messrs. Thorne and Guerini gave a very successful concert of chamber music. An excellent programme was splendidly rendered. The quintett for piano-forte, two violins, viola, and 'cello by Brahms (op. 34) was the opening item, the performers being Messrs. Thorne, Guerini, Pitts, Waud, and Peruzzi. Throughout the performance of this long work the audience listened with the closest attention, disturbing a dead silence only by outbursts of applause at the conclusion of each movement. The executants acquitted themselves in the most able manner. A Partita in D minor for piano and violin by Dr. Hubert Parry formed an interesting feature in the programme, and in which Messrs. Thorne and Guerini showed themselves in good form. This very pleasing work is dedicated to Edward Guerini. Mr. Thorne played two charming *morceaux*, Sir A. Sullivan's "Twilight" and a "Gavotte" from his own pen, and was most enthusiastically applauded. The programme closed with Mendelssohn's quartet in D major (Op. 44, No. 1) for two violins, viola and 'cello, in which the previously-mentioned executants again acquitted themselves well. Mdle. De Lido contributed several vocal selections, delighting the audience with her vocalisation, and received hearty and prolonged applause.

F. M. H.

CARMEN AND MADAME MINNIE HAUKE.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "MUSICAL WORLD."

DEAR SIR: Your Edinburgh correspondent of Dec. 3rd states that "Carmen" was brought out in London by Madame Minnie Hauk, "some twenty years ago." Permit me to say that twenty years ago the opera was still unwritten. It was in June, 1878, eleven years ago, that "Carmen" was produced at Her Majesty's Theatre, and the celebration of the tenth anniversary of this memorable event took place in June, 1888, at Covent Garden, with several of the original artists in the cast, of course including Madame Minnie Hauk, who at that occasion was presented with a gold laurel wreath, subscribed for by her numerous London admirers.

I am, dear sir,

Respectfully yours,

VERITAS.

Dresden, Dec. 10.

The Organ World.

HINTS FOR A MORE INTELLIGENT RENDERING OF THE PSALMS.

BY THE REV. FREDERICK K. HARFORD, M.A.

(Continued from page 889.)

Before going on to the consideration of peculiarities that occur in other Psalms it will be well to place more definitely before those who desire better treatment of these treasured Hebrew poems some of the difficulties which must meet every Reformer who attempts to point anew our English Prayer-Book translation of them. I have already alluded to what has been at times asserted by well-known English musicians—that, if proper expression is to be given to them and their true meaning conveyed, the strict form of the Chant must occasionally be modified; and that careful examination of the whole Psalter is necessary before any one can say exactly how far this modification should extend.

Two examples have at present been shown, the second of which only can be said to have received treatment that differs from ordinary usage. In the XIXth Psalm the two verses 7 and 8 have been subdivided, and the 3rd quarter of the Chant has been applied to each of the four portions 7, 7a, 8, 8a—yet we find that we have not accomplished all we want. The strict form of that 3rd quarter leaves us no choice but to accentuate the 1st or 2nd syllable of the preposition 'unto'—two horns of a dilemma which we wish to avoid. If we go further back and take the word 'wisdom' into the penultimate bar of the Chant we find that there will be five syllables in that last bar but one.

How shall this difficulty be overcome? May we not here follow a precedent often found in Music, sacred as well as secular, and treat this bar as being in triple time—three minims instead of two? The application of the notes to the words would then be thus:—

wis-dom un-to the simple

If this be allowed, the phrase would become at once relieved: there would be no false accent; and note-pointing would enable every chorister to sing this passage correctly with perfect ease. If this change to triple time be considered an admissible modification, we can at once set right two other phrases which have been left in an unsatisfactory state, viz.:

light unto the eyes

in v. 8a of the XIXth, and

ex-er-cise him-sel day and night

in the 2nd verse of the 1st Psalm.

Unfortunately, triple time will not help us over the difficulty found in the latter part of the last verse of the 1st Psalm, to which three ways of pointing have already been unsuccessfully applied, and which—as occupying an important place in the Psalter—must not, if we can possibly help it, be left in this hapless condition. Possibly a little more examination and rearrangement of syllables will accomplish what we desire. At all events I will rake up afresh my small heap of alternative adaptations in the hope of finding something more suitable than I have seen as yet, and—failing in the attempt—must trust that some abler investigator will turn his attention to this—as it seems to me—difficult point, and succeed in obtaining a better result.

In the 1st place there is the division found in the Cathedral Psalter 'un | godly | sha-ll | perish.' This is certainly inadmissible for two reasons:—1st because the slurred continuance or elongation of one syllable into two (always most unpleasant in a chant) should never be used upon the higher vowels (certainly not upon A, which requires the throat and mouth to be wide open and supposes the breathing to be full, e.g. 'ba-ath,' 'fa-all,' and the like. That slur is quite objectionable enough when it occurs upon the lowest vowel, for which the breath is partially suppressed and the mouth nearly closed. 2ndly because this strong stress (a bar of two minims) upon the auxiliary verb creates a meaning which is at once beyond the intention of the original Hebrew, and of the English translators, whose sole object was to express a general—prophetic statement, not a special—almost personal—assertion of the will.

The accentuation of an auxiliary verb, save for rhetorical purposes, is simply a vulgar error: yet habit has for so long a time connected this practice with certain portions of the Church service that even some highly educated persons will require a few minutes reflection before they perceive that it is faulty. Is there, I would seriously ask any linguistic scholar, any doubt whatever about the subordinate character of the auxiliary verb?

Is there a living language (I speak, of course, of the non-inflected) in which the auxiliary—used to express past, present, or future—takes away the natural accent from the verb? Compare, for example, French, Spanish, Italian, 'j'aurai parlé,' 'hè tenido,' 'avete finito,'—it will be seen that the same rule obtains:—whilst in English the colloquial abbreviations which we commonly use show that such accentuation is unidiomatic. 'He'll go,' 'We'll take care,' 'I'm obliged,' 'You'd have done so,'—none of these curtailments could possibly have come into existence if the accent fell by right upon the auxiliary.

Accent falls naturally upon the *primary* idea which the collocation of words expresses; and this idea from the very nature of things can never be arrogated by the auxiliary, seeing that the auxiliary is introduced for the express purpose of qualifying the primary idea. *Rhetorical* accent can of course be placed for a special reason upon any word whatsoever; but this kind of accent is used to *change* the ordinary sense of the word not to help it to express its natural meaning.

Concerning the unfortunate stress upon 'shall' which, since the days of King Charles II, has been prevalent throughout England in the latter part of the Doxology, whether said or sung, I hope to speak further on, when time and space permit. For the moment I will not do more than say that of the 6 different ways of pointing which I am able to apply to the latter part of the last verse of the 1st Psalm 'I sha-ll | perish' seems to be unquestionably the worst.

In the 2nd way 'un | go-d | ly shall | perish' the undue stress upon 'ly' is very uncouth, and therefore this rendering is worse than the 3rd way 'un | godly | —shall | perish,' which last is, however, far from satisfactory.

A 4th reading ' | of the un | godly shall | ' gives two successive dactyls, which is always unpleasant, and especially here where no shadow of flippancy should mar the effect of solemn words.

5thly 'the | ungod | ly shall | perish' throws a stress upon the last syllable of the adjective—which I have already spoken of as undesirable.

One way more remains, 'the | u—n | godly shall | perish' and this, amongst the 6 that have been given, seems to me the least objectionable, inasmuch as the accents fall correctly upon 'un god ly,' whilst the slur is used with a vowel which compels the mouth to be nearly closed. The comparison of these examples may serve to convince those who are interested in the possible Reform we are now considering—how much 'wrestling with the impossible' (to borrow Professor Ruskin's eloquent expression)—will be necessary on the part of any who attempt to re-point the English Psalter.

(To be continued.)

MUSICAL ACCOMPANIMENT OF THE PSALMS.

BY F. GILBERT WEBB.

(Continued from page 872.)

The failure to perceive the lyrical element of the Psalms is perhaps still more observable in the customary use, or more correctly the abuse, of the double chant, the choice of which for particular psalms would appear to be chiefly dictated by the psalm's possession of an even number of verses, a rule as simple in application as disastrous in artistic results. Another custom which has brought obloquy on the double chant is the practice of trying to make it "fit in" to an odd number of verses by suddenly beginning in the middle of the chant, with utter disregard to the general incoherence of the chords thus brought into juxtaposition. From these inartistic customs opinion amongst many musicians has become much divided concerning the double chant ever being appropriate, but while it must be admitted that the single chant is most suitable to the greater number of the psalms, and sung antiphonally is appropriate to all, there are some psalms, and here and there certain verses which distinctly gain by being allied to a double chant. Take for instance the following CXIVth psalm:—

- Ver. 1. When Israel came out of Egypt,
And the house of Jacob from among the strange people,
2. Judah was his sanctuary
And Israel his dominion.

3. The sea saw that and fled:
Jordan was driven back.
4. The mountains skipped like rams,
And the little hills like young sheep.
5. What aileth thee, O thou sea, that thou fleddest?
And thou Jordan, that thou wast driven back?
6. Ye mountains, that ye skipped like rams;
And ye little hills, like young sheep?
7. Tremble thou earth, at the presence of the Lord,
At the presence of the God of Jacob;
8. Who turned the hard rock into a springing water,
And the flint-stone into a springing well.*

Examination of the above will reveal such perfect parallelism between the odd and even verses, and coherency in design throughout, that a double chant seems almost a necessity to preserve the homogeneous character of the poem. Some few other psalms would equally profit by their verses being thus musically connected, while in some instances the lyrical element and relation of certain portions would be more clearly shown by their being sung to a double chant, the other verses being set to a single chant. A favourable example of this is afforded in the refrain of the XLIIInd and XLIIIrd psalms at verses 5 and 6, 14 and 15, and 5 and 6 in the latter psalm.

Ver. 5. Why art thou so heavy, O my soul?

And why art thou so disquieted within me?

6. O put thy trust in God:

For I will yet give him thanks, which is the help of my countenance, and my God.

This use of the double chant for verses where parallelism exists in the text would, of course, sometimes necessitate the chant being commenced on an even numbered verse, a proceeding which for some inexplicable reason would seem to be regarded as an impossibility, but from the foregoing quotations it will be perceived that the presence of such parallelism can alone justify the use of this form of musical setting, which otherwise obscures instead of assists the comprehension of the text, and the only case in which the recommencing at the latter half of a double chant is admissible is when the parallel of one verse is completed by the two following, as for example, in Psalm LXVII:—

Ver. 5. Let the people praise, O God;

Let all the people praise Thee.

6. Then shall the earth bring forth her increase;

And God, even our own God, shall give us His blessing.

7. God shall bless us;

And all the ends of the world shall fear Him.

Great care, however, is necessary in the choice of a double chant which is intended to be thus treated, for the disjointed and harsh effect generally produced by the repetition of the last half of the chant is not merely, as many would seem to suppose, the result of consequent juxtaposition of perhaps distantly related chords, but because that part of the melody which probably for some time has been impressed on the mind of the auditor as a consequence and development of previous melodic structure, is suddenly disconnected from its progenitor, and made to take its place; in other words, a phrase which has been associated as a result, is by abrupt transition converted into a cause, the disturbing effect being enhanced by the loss of the preceding balance of parts enforced by repetition in many previous verses. The proof of this is seen in the fact that a double chant may be followed by single of related tonality without producing a sense of incoherence. Thus, while a modulatory chord or false cadence would mitigate the evil by preparing the auditor for the coming dislocation, this device would not altogether remove the inartistic effect. Moreover, the duration of such a chord occurring at the end of the chant would necessarily be brief, and in a large building would be apt to lead to in-harmonious results, as the parts would of course be different on such occasions; if, too, the precaution is taken of choosing double chants, in which the first and third phrases have a strong mutual resemblance, and, of course, the harmonies admitting of this new connection, a false cadence will be unnecessary. Whatever plan is adopted, however, the result from the reasons stated above must always be more or less unsatisfactory. The

* This is quoted from the Prayer-Book version, but arranged strophically and according to the original divisions, the stopping being that of the Bible version. This arrangement will be adapted in future quotations as more conducive to perception of design and lyrical element.

artistic setting for homogeneous subject matter extended over three verses obviously being a triple chant.

It is somewhat unaccountable that while the quadruple chant, which only in rare instances can be appropriately applied to the psalms, has been accepted by many, the triple chant, for which there is often real need, is scarcely ever heard. Many psalms commence with three verses, which form an epitome or contain in condensed form the lyrical element of the subsequent verses, as for instance the opening of the LXXXIV. Psalm—

Ver. 1. O How amiable are Thy dwellings: thou Lord of hosts!

2. My soul hath a desire longing to enter into the courts of the Lord: My heart and my flesh rejoice in the living God.

3. Yea, the sparrow hath found her an house,
And the swallow a nest, where she may lay her young,
Even thy altars, O Lord of hosts, my King and my God.

The above verses are so obviously dependent on each other and, if the remainder of the psalm is read, will be seen to be so beautifully expressive of the spirit of the poem, while yet forming a distinct portion, that a triple chant followed by a single, will at once become apparent as the most artistic setting in chant form.

Antithetic parallelism between two consecutive verses is of too rare occurrence to admit of effective musical illustration for congregational purposes, but the first half of many verses are antithetically related to the second, viz. Psalm XX.

Ver. 7. Some put their trust in chariots, and some in horses:

But we will remember the Name of the Lord our God.

8. They are brought down and fallen:

But we are risen and stand upright.

Such passages should be sung to a single chant and the antithesis enforced by the chant being divided antiphonally, this will be found no more difficult for the choir than singing the parts of a double chant by the cantori and decani respectively, while it will afford another means of maintaining the interest and attention of the singers.

The foregoing remarks naturally imply change of chants taking place during the rendering of most psalms, and on the expediency of this, much variety of opinion exists, the chief argument against the practice being that it disturbs the congregation, and in some cases reduces them to silence. Supposing this assertion to be true, it is an open question, however, if such interruption to an incomprehensive chanting of the text obscured by being allied to incongruous music, as it must be in most psalms if one chant is used throughout, is not of considerable value, provided the changes serve to enforce the meaning and beauty of the psalms.

In this respect the use and artistic purpose of different chants is apparently much overlooked; change should not only be made to draw attention to the presence of varied sentiment, but should also mark the relationship between certain verses, and the chants for each psalm should, as a whole, be so arranged as to show the design and coherency of the poem. Where the psalms are thus artistically set, change of chants will be found to increase rather than diminish the attention and sympathies of the congregation. Two items are, however, absolutely indispensable, viz., the changes must always be effected with the greatest precision and certainty by the choir, and the same chants should always be used for the same passages. The value and necessity of this latter particular is obvious, and if the former cannot be attained perfectly, no change should be made, nothing being more distressing than uncertainty of the choir at such times.

In cases, therefore, where the choir-master is doubtful of probable consequences, by all means "let him abstain," and fall back on simpler devices. Much may be done to mark variety of thought in the text by a change from *forte* to *piano* or *vice versa*, provided the chants are of unpronounced character, and in other cases by singing certain verses in unison by the whole choir or by the men only. This latter might always be advantageously employed in those verses where the Deity speaks in the first person; such passages abound in the Psalms, and every churchgoer who has bestowed any attention on the matter, must have noticed the frequent incongruity and confusion arising from the chanting being continued on such occasions in placid disregard of the frequently deep solemnity of the words. Whatever methods are adopted, however, the chief aim should be, while permitting the participation of the congregation, to excite the use in some degree of their intellectual faculties, and so to secure for the Psalms that attention which these highly poetic and expressive compositions merit from all who share in their rendering.

(To be continued.)

NOTES.

Considerable musical activity has prevailed in many London churches this Advent, and, on the whole, both the works performed and the general standard of excellence attained have shown satisfactory proof of artistic advancement since last year, while larger congregations have testified to increased appreciation of these musical services. In the matter of attendance it must be admitted, however, the East compared favourably with the West. The Sunday afternoon organ recitals at the People's Palace have been largely attended, and a crowded audience filled the Queen's Hall on the occasion of the performance of Sir Sterndale Bennett's beautiful cantata, "The Woman of Samaria." For the solos in this work the services of Mrs. Helen Trust, Mrs. Grahame Coles, Mr. Rechab Tandy, and Mr. Bertram Latter were engaged, the choruses and orchestral accompaniments being rendered by the societies in connection with the People's Palace, conducted by Mr. Orton Bradley. Although many refined details of Sir Sterndale's score were unobserved, the performance on the whole of the concerted numbers was highly creditable for such young societies, and the immense audience followed their praiseworthy efforts with evident appreciation and enjoyment. The admirable oratorio performances at St. John's Waterloo-road, where Sullivan's "Prodigal Son," the "Elijah," and Spohr's "Last Judgment," have been successively given, under the direction of Mr. Henry J. B. Dart, have also been attended by overflowing congregations. The value of these and similar energetic endeavours of zealous and capable musicians will probably not be fully estimated until the next generation, when the fruit of the seeds now being planted will be seen in the still larger participation in refined and elevating amusements.

Travelling westward, an excellent performance of "Mors et Vita" was given on the 12th inst. at St. Marylebone Parish Church, the conductor being Mr. W. Hodge, with Mr. H. Hodge at the organ, assisted by a small orchestra. The admirable training of both chorus and instrumentalists was quickly observable in the rendering of the "Dies iræ," sung to the English words, with which number the performance was commenced, and the artistic level thus attained was well maintained throughout. The principal singers were Masters Smith, Bailey, and Kiddle, Mr. Edwin Houghton, and Mr. Sackville Evans proving themselves capable exponents of the tenor and baritone solos.

Another performance worthy of mention from its artistic excellence was that of the "Last Judgment" on the 1st and 15th instant, at Holy Trinity, Brompton, S.W. In this instance the accompaniments were effectively supplied by the organ, presided at by Mr. James Waterman, Mr. Pownel acting as conductor, who may be congratulated on the finished and intelligent singing of the choir. The solos and vocal concerted pieces were well sung by Miss Cherry, Miss King, Mr. Percy Palmer, and Mr. Davis, the exceptionally fine bass voice of the latter gentleman considerably contributing to the general success. The same work was performed with equal success on two occasions at St. Peter's, Eaton Square, under the sole direction of Mr. W. de Manby Sergison, who conducted from his instrument with marked ability.

Mr. George Robertson Sinclair, who has succeeded the late Dr. Colborne as organist of Hereford Cathedral, though only twenty-six years of age, has already gained a considerable reputation as a skilful organist and choral conductor; his success in this latter branch of his art, as conductor of the Truro Philharmonic Society, the Choir Association, and the Diocesan Choral Union probably being greatly instrumental in securing him the appointment to Hereford. Mr. Sinclair commenced his musical studies at the Irish Academy, Dublin, subsequently becoming a pupil of the late Sir Frederick Onseley at Tenbury, and in 1879 received still further musical training from Mr. C. H. Lloyd at Gloucester, where he became organist of St. Mary-le-Crypt Church and deputy organist at the Cathedral, and in 1881 was appointed by the Archbishop of Canterbury, organist of Truro Cathedral.

For if your author be profoundly good
'Twill cost you dear before he's understood.

Anon.

The Dramatic World.

EXPERIMENTS.—A "WRITER OF PLAYS."

LONDON, WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 18, 1889.

MY DEAR MR. FIELDMOUSE,—

How, this autumn, the weeks have followed and have not resembled each other! First has come a week thronged with productions of plays, triumphant with successes: then a barren week and silent: then a week of which there is something to say, were it but worth the saying: and then a week which, having nothing of its own, is full of promise for the week to come.

This last is perhaps our present state. "Last weeks" are announced of several long and prosperous runs; "Sweet Lavender" and "Paul Jones" will leave off soon, nor will "Caste" be with us much longer. And the very day after I write this letter to you will be perhaps the busiest of all the season: for it will see the beginnings of Mr. F. R. Benson's adventurous management of the Globe and of Messrs. Sims and Pettitt's melodrama "Master and Man" at the Princess's, while in the afternoon Mr. Robert Buchanan's new play "Man and the Woman" will be produced at the Criterion, and there will be moreover a festivity at the Savoy—a "professional" *matinée* in honour of the success of their new "Gondoliers." (Even as I write I find that "Master and Man" has been transposed to to-night—but the moral is the same.)

Perhaps of these new things Mr. Benson's venture is the most interesting, as it is certainly the most daring. He proposes to perform—at present, at all events—"classical plays" only, and to limit the consecutive run of each play (as I understand) to twelve nights; though, even if this be so, Mr. Benson is already a backslider, for a few years ago he professed his determination never to play in any piece more than three nights together. He has during several years of touring in the provinces—mainly in the smaller towns—got together a *répertoire* in which his company is thoroughly exercised; and this company—strengthened by the addition of Miss Kate Rorke and Mr. Charles Cartwright—he has now brought boldly from the audiences of Winchester, "Newport, Mon.," and Oxford to face the fiercer audience of London. I wish him well, desiring as I do above all things that someone may be found to break up the long-run system: yet not overhopeful that Mr. Benson is the man.

Another experiment, as yet in a much earlier stage, is the *Théâtre Libre* which the editors of a little theatrical paper wish to found, and on which they have gathered the opinions of a good many leading authors and critics. Most of these speak kind words, which cost little and are worth—how much? But indeed the enterprise is hardly likely to do much harm, if it fail; and if it succeed only a very little, how useful even one short step in advance will be! Both this *Théâtre Libre* and Mr. Benson's experiment show that men's thoughts are turning towards a kind of *Comédie Française* for London; and when the end is so admirable shall we be too ready to quarrel with the means?

One cannot but think that there is a man just dead who might have helped our English stage many steps further than any *Théâtre Libre* or Benson Company who might have been to us these thirty years past and more, an Ibsen or a Hugo, who might have revived the highest drama in England—if, how shall I say it?—if he had been a dramatist? It is a little curious that the day last week on which I was writing to you—in a brief parenthesis—that "Browning was hardly a dramatist," should have been the poet's last day wholly spent on earth. By the next evening had passed away the singer who now

for thirty years has been, to many cultured men and women, their strongest literary influence, and who by his own choice described himself as "Robert Browning, writer of plays."

I own that to me it seems that the literary judgment of this period, when Browning and George Eliot may be said to have succeeded to the influence—with a narrower circle—of Tennyson and Thackeray and Dickens, is wrong: that these two writers will not live as their predecessors have lived and will live on. Nevertheless, I cannot let the death of such a "writer of plays" go by without a little chat with you about his strength and his weakness.

The first thing, of course, that strikes one about his plays is that they are not acted. I do not know how long Macready played "Strafford"; but I believe that if I say that all Browning's dramas have not, in all, been performed in England thirty nights, I shall be well on the safe side. Nor have they ever been acted in German, or French, or Norwegian, as Victor Hugo's and Ibsen's plays have been translated into stranger-tongues.

Yet there are few of us who have not read "The Blot on the Scutcheon," "Luria," "Colombe's Birthday," with very much interest. Many people who would entirely fail in the attempt to read most other modern English plays, have not only read but enjoyed Browning's. He was in the first place a poet: how great a poet one need not attempt to say, but a poet unmistakably. And he was thoroughly modern, what he had to say was new; and then—a greater matter I am sure—the stories he chose to tell were, in his early days at least, always interesting.

His plays, then, please in reading; but they were tried on the stage—fifty years ago, thirty years ago, last year—and with the same result always. They lost in being acted. They were played with intelligence and enthusiasm; but the enthusiasm did not cross the footlights. And why?

I do not think that the fault was with the audience. I believe that Browning as a writer of plays had two defects, both of them fatal.

First, that he never learned his art. A great dramatist is not merely a great poet. Put one of Shakespeare's tragedies into the plainest prose, and you will still have a fine acting-play. Read any one of Browning's plays to a stage manager, and he will show you that the poet had never set himself seriously, painfully, to work to study the necessities of the stage. This is not art. Do you suppose that Apelles could not tell you more about the properties of marble, and the qualities of his tools, than any stonemason of his day?

I do not think that Browning was naturally, in the true sense, dramatic. All his people talk Browning—they do not talk simply Strafford, Mildred, Tresham—whoever they are supposed to be: it is all Browningsese, with a little more or a little less of quaintness and obscurity. Compare, for example, Browning's "Caliban" with Shakespeare's; or notice how Tennyson's personality is lost, as Browning never loses his, in the "Northern Farmer."

But even granting that Browning may have been born dramatic, he did not make himself a dramatist. Mrs. Browning, in "Aurora Leigh," even sneers at the necessities of stagecraft. Perhaps her husband was above them; Shakespeare was not.

And then—as I said last week, the stage is a terrible touchstone of reality. An ingenious subtlety, amusing in the study, has to prove its truth on the stage. When the hero of the "Blot on the Scutcheon" comes in, as the tragedy is drawing near its close, and says:—

Well said of Guendolen!

I dared not hope you'd die.

Well, when this happens before your mind's eye only, you are

willing—knowing the strange workings of the human spirit—to take it that some such thought may have passed through the brother's mind, as he saw that Mildred was dying of a broken heart.

But hear a live man speak it, looking at a live woman—as I have heard it spoken, and well spoken—and you will feel a shock. Instinct will tell you “This is not real, not human; it is untrue, a sham, or best an artifice where grand simplicity should be.” It is as false as is, in its smaller way, that earlier scene where a lover creeping stealthily through the night sings aloud a serenade—too pretty, we may suppose, to be omitted for art's sake!

No, my dear Mr. Fieldmouse. We have lost a poet, a vigorous and interesting personality, a cheery preacher of optimism in these doubtful days; but the stage is not the poorer by a dramatist. Or so at least thinks one insignificant

MUS IN URBE.

THE WESTMINSTER PLAY.

The last two representations for this year of “The Andria” of Terence took place respectively upon Monday and Wednesday evening, in St. Peter's College Dormitory, at Westminster, and were attended by large audiences.

The cast, as a whole, gave an interpretation which displayed rather the results of scholastic, than of dramatic training; and, without offering any of the striking examples of individual talent, which, at intervals, have adorned the College stage in bygone years, afforded a rendering of their author, in which patches of modern histrionic improvement were curiously interwoven with the texture of obsolete farcical effects.

Thus the exquisite refinements of what is called “The New Greek Comedy”—as translated and adapted by Terence for his Roman auditory—were too often neglected or misunderstood, and were only saved by the wholesome recollection and example of the training of an unhappily “Past Master” in the art, from being frequently frittered away or overborne by a mass of ridiculous “comic business.” In Act I., Scene 1, Mr. C. A. Phillimore, as Simo, gave his description of the incidents which led up to the action of the play, too much in the style of a mere narrator, instead of that of the father who was vitally interested in all that had passed, and Mr. A. C. Nesbitt, as Sosia, failed to show the Terentian irony which pervades all the utterances of the character, and scarcely displayed the real or assumed deference to his *quondam* master, which he ought to exhibit, making even his exit with far too independent an air. Mr. J. S. Phillimore, as Davus, in Scenes 2 and 3 of the same act, was fairly good, but did not make some of his chief points—especially his well-known *Davus sum non Edipus*—and gave his account of Glycerium's parentage and fortunes in an airy instead of in the requisite mock-heroic tone (since he is imitating the story told by the women about themselves) and so lost the opportunity for making a point in his own remark *Fabula!* Mr. R. Balfour, as Mysis, besides maintaining the manner and appearance of age which was utterly out of harmony with the author's intention (since Mysis is the moderately young companion of and attendant upon Chrysis and Glycerium) had evidently not been impregnated with the force of the word *primo* in conjunction with *partu*, as conveying the extra perils often accompanying a first confinement, and the consequent danger of entrusting the management of the patient to the drinking and rash old nurse, *temulenta et temeraria* Lesbia. As Pamphilus Mr. A. L. Longhurst exhibited vexation rather than emotion in Scene 5, Act IV., and in his marvellously beautiful description of the death of Chrysis, one of the finest opportunities ever given by a dramatist to an actor for displaying true pathos, did nothing but lower his voice to a key which rendered the touching language almost wholly ineffective. An unfortunate habit moreover on the part of this actor of constantly looking on the ground spoilt much of the moral force and youthful vigour of the character which he impersonated. Mr. G. G. S. Gillett, as Charinus, in these respects presented an agreeable contrast with his young comrade, since his attitude was always manly and his manner such as evinced that he thoroughly entered into the spirit of his part. Mr. J. S. Phillimore, too, in giving Davus's admirably comic account of his investigation in Scene 2, Act II., repeated the mistake made in the last presentment of “The Andria,” of representing himself as

an eaves-dropper and in approaching the door of Glycerium, as if it were the door of Chremes—a mistake probably arising from a confusion between this passage and one that occurs in “The Phormio,” when Geta does describe his conduct as a listener, the words of Davus in “The Andria,” *accessi intro asperi*, being only a confirmation of the reality of his inquiry and not an account of his method of conducting it. But we must not continue to even generally note the mistakes of interpretation occurring in this year's play at Westminster. There was so much that was creditable in it that a youthful company may well stand excused, especially if their dramatic inspiration may have been insufficient or untrustworthy. The Crito of Mr. H. L. Stephenson was remarkable for its natural appearance and manner, albeit that the enunciation might have been more effectual, and the Byrria of Mr. L. F. Wintle—though his advance between Davus and Simo towards the foot-lights when delivering his final aside in Sc. 5, Act II. was evidently a wrong piece of business—was nevertheless a laudable impersonation. Chremes in the hands of Mr. P. Williamson, though lacking in force, was yet consistently sustained, and Mr. J. S. Phillimore scored a genuine success in the “Baby Scene.” Taken altogether the presentment of “The Andria” in 1889 scarcely corresponded with the ancient, much less with the modern *genius loci*, and was notably deficient in expressing the humour, pathos, and subtlety of the great author whom it was intended to illustrate.

NOTES AND NEWS.

As the year draws to its close, the true Londoner should look at his map—if but a map were published yearly, to show the growth and change of this vast world, which was a city once. Every way new streets push out from its edges into the country; everywhere, in what were lately suburbs, each patch of lingering green is hidden by bricks and mortar; everywhere in the centre, the old city, small houses are falling to make room for large, wide streets are piercing through the slums. And these great streets and houses point ever westward, westward.

Take our own special houses—the playhouses. In the last five or ten years their centre has become altogether displaced; and it is quite curious to look at a map of thirty and at one of twenty years ago and note the westward movement of the stage. Think, middle-aged reader, what and where were the theatres when we were boys—“merry, merry boys” at the pantomime season especially. (For then even fashionable theatres had their pantomime season, and scarcely a single one would go without.) There was then—say about 1860—one group of playhouses about the middle of the Strand: Drury Lane, Covent Garden, the Lyceum, the Olympic, and the Strand, with the Adelphi a little to the west. Then northerly was the distant Princess's, and far west the Haymarket and the unfortunate St. James's. And that was all: one group of theatres, with Drury Lane as its centre.

The Prince of Wales's and the Royalty were perhaps the first intruders into this happy family, though neither of these was actually a new theatre. Then there was the Queen's in Long Acre, since departed, and gradually came about the burst of theatre-building which in a few years almost doubled the stages of London. The Gaiety, the Globe (twins within a day or so), the Vaudeville, Toole's, the Court, the Criterion, the Opera Comique, with its successor the Savoy, led on to the later Prince of Wales's, the Comedy, the Avenue, the Empire, and Terry's. Within a year have come upon us three more western theatres, the Lyric, the Shaftesbury, and the Garrick; and at least one more is threatened in Shaftesbury-avenue. So that now perhaps the midmost of the theatres is Toole's, which is well to the west of any standing in 1860, except the outlying St. James's and Haymarket, and perhaps the northerly Princess's. And be it noticed that we have now six-and-twenty West End playhouses in place of nine, and that this is the most prosperous season they have ever known.

Further remark, that thirteen of these twenty-six theatres have actor-managers, who play the chief parts in all plays produced by them.

“Forgiven”—said by many critics to be almost the best of the late James Albery's works—is to be revived at the Criterion as soon as “Caste” is taken off. It was a failure originally; one will be interested to note

how far the taste of London audiences may have changed during the last dozen years.

Mr F. R. Benson, who reopened the Globe with "A Midsummer Night's Dream" on Thursday of this week, proposes to produce in rapid succession "The Taming of the Shrew," "The Merchant of Venice," "The Merry Wives of Windsor," "Othello," "Hamlet," "Twelfth Night," and other plays. As a guarantee of good faith—if not necessarily for any great amount of publication—he intends to issue books containing ten tickets for the series of performances.

Novelties—new and old—will soon be produced at no less than eight of our theatres. For this the thanks of devout playgoers are doubtless due to Mr. P. T. Barnum—and presumably to his partner, Mr. Bailey, whom no one ever mentions, poor man. While a theatre draws laboriously its thousand, Olympia gaily sweeps in its tens of thousands; and sightseers who are there cannot, necessarily, be anywhere else at the same time.

CONCERTS.

LONDON SYMPHONY CONCERTS.

At Mr. Henschel's third concert a great improvement in the expressive power of the band was evident. This was particularly noticeable in the slow movement of the Symphony—Beethoven's No. 4 in B flat; in the exquisite "Love Scene" from "Romeo and Juliet" by Berlioz, and in the Funeral March from Wagner's "Gotterdammerung." A novelty in the shape of one of Mozart's musical jokes was presented—for the first time in London, it was stated. This, a Notturmo-Serenade in D for four orchestras is supposed to have been written when Mozart was twenty-one years old. The work is in three movements, Andante, Allegretto, and Minuetto. Each orchestra consists of two violins, viola, and violoncello, with two horns, three of the four being used solely for the production of echo effects. The grace and fancy never absent from the smallest example of the Salzburg master's skill are of course not wanting here, but in other respects the Notturmo-Serenade is valuable chiefly as an illustration of the humorous in music. The concert, which began with this interesting trifle, ended with Wagner's "Walkürenritt." It would have been difficult to arrange a more effective contrast.

POPULAR CONCERTS.

A particularly fine performance by Madame Neruda, MM. Ries, Straus, and Piatti, of Mendelssohn's spirited Quartet in D major (Op. 44, No. 1) opened the concert last Saturday, and the interest aroused by the first number seemed steadily to increase to the end. Certainly, all these ever excellent artists on this occasion excelled themselves, and the same must be said of Miss Fanny Davies, who gave a truly ideal rendering of Schumann's Carnival Scenes. Madame Neruda led Brahms' noble Quartet in G minor in such a manner as to produce the reading most nearly approaching perfection of this grandly energetic work that it has ever been our pleasure to listen to; indeed, if a little more fierce energy had been infused into the opening movement, we should have gladly confessed that perfection had been attained, and Art could no farther go. Nor was the vocalist, Mdle. Janson, behind the instrumentalists in point of excellence, her rendering of Schubert's "Der Tod und das Mädchen" and Liszt's "King of Thule"—the latter almost a symphonic poem in miniature, ably accompanied by Mr. Frantzen—leaving absolutely nothing to be desired.

Brahms led the way on Monday, his Sextet in G major being heard at these concerts for the twelfth time. That the merits of this fine, though unequal, work would be fully revealed by the artists concerned in its interpretation—Madame Neruda, MM. Ries, Straus, Gibson, Howell, and Piatti, was a foregone conclusion, the result, it may be hoped, serving to convince those not familiar with the work that Brahms is not the "obscure" composer some "superior persons" would, even now, have us believe. For her solo Miss Davies again drew upon Schumann—five numbers of his "Kreisleriana" serving perfectly to exhibit her intimate knowledge of the master's style. Being recalled, she played another

number from the same charming work. Miss Davies afterwards joined Madame Neruda in Beethoven's sonata in G (op. 30). Madame Neruda always seems to be in particular sympathy with this most engaging example of the master's genius, but her delightful rendering of the Tempo di Minuetto on this occasion deserves special mention. Signor Piatti played the movements by Veracini which he has so often played before, their old world charm and tuneful quaintness being sufficient justification. The encore provoked by the great violoncellist's performance was, one is glad to note, resisted. That excellent artist, Miss Liza Lehmann introduced a charming old song by Arne, "Polly Willis," and in this, as in Thomé's "Les Perles d'Or," delighted her hearers no less by her choice than by her perfect vocalisation.

STROLLING PLAYERS' AMATEUR ORCHESTRAL SOCIETY.

The above Society inaugurated their eighth season in brilliant fashion at St. James's Hall on Saturday last. The Society has always borne a high reputation for efficiency, but if their performance on this occasion is to be considered as indicative of the progress of this special form of musical culture, the time seems to be fast approaching when it will be no longer necessary to judge amateur and professional orchestras by different standards. Precision, accurate intonation, and attention to light and shade—qualities which distinguish all high-class orchestral performances—were conspicuously present, and without making needless comparisons we are bound to say that kindred societies have hitherto exhibited them in small or inappreciable quantities. *Palmas qui meruit ferat.* It is only right that these excellent results, which reflect such honour on English musical art, should be attributed to the skill, perseverance, and enthusiasm of the honorary conductor, Mr. Norfolk Megone, and the experienced leadership of MM. Pollitzer and H. M. Morris. There is no need to deal at length with the various items of a lengthy programme. Its most interesting features were admirable renderings of Svendsen's Symphony in D, op. 4, one of the least inspired works of a gifted composer, a very effective Serenade by Saint-Saëns, Délibes' delightful Ballet Music "La Source," and Kreutzer's "Nachtlager von Granada," and A. Thomas's "Raymond" Overtures. M. Johannes Wolff played in his now well-known style violin solos by Thomé, Wieniawski, and Laub; Mrs. Dyke was heard in Handel's "Ombra mai fu" and Spohr's "Bird and the Maiden," and Mr. Lawrence Kellie sang with good intention, but imperfect realisation, his own setting of "Douglas Gordon" and Sullivan's "The Sailor's Grave."

CRYSTAL PALACE.

That there are more things in the heaven and earth of Mr. F. H. Cowen's musical nature than have yet been dreamt of by musical philosophers, was indicated to some extent by the new cantata, or "Old English Idyll," from his pen, which was produced at the Crystal Palace on Saturday last. There are not wanting those, it is true, who believe that Mr. Cowen is capable of much stronger work than any he has yet given to the world, and that to his acknowledged high gifts of grace and tender fancy, he adds the possibilities of considerable strength; but even these had hardly expected that in "St. John's Eve," a work confessedly intended to meet the requirements of choral societies with limited executive resources, and therefore not challenging criticism as a *chef d'œuvre*, the element of virility should be present to a greater extent than has sometimes been the case with works of higher pretensions. It was a pleasant surprise, and we accept the undoubted strength of much of the writing in the new work as earnest of the better things for which we have waited. But we shall certainly not grudge the period of expectancy if in the end Mr. Cowen give us something in which, while his exquisite flow of melody and poetic fancy still find place, strength shall not be sacrificed to symmetry nor power to prettiness.

Readers of THE MUSICAL WORLD have for some time been familiar with the story which Mr. Bennett has built up from the traditions which centre in the rural mind around St. John's Eve. If the libretto have a fault it is in the comparative monotony which it imposes upon the musician. The rustic dance around the bonfire certainly has afforded an opportunity for some strong and picturesque writing, and Mr. Cowen has turned it to admirable account; but the character of Robert, the "poor suitor," whose place in Nancy's affections is taken by the young squire, is somewhat feebly drawn. It may be said that the story is

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essentially one for graceful rather than dramatic treatment. Nevertheless, it is not impossible to imagine that Mr. Cowen might have been provided with greater opportunity for contrast of colour, and it is certain that the work, especially its latter part, would gain by condensation. But, as it stands, we may recognise in it the presence of all the qualities already mentioned as abounding in Mr. Cowen's work—much play of poetic fancy, charm of melody, effective choral writing, and appropriate orchestral colour. To these must be added, as was said at the outset, a very welcome virility and solidity, in some passages. The most popular numbers will certainly be the chorus, "Ho! Good St. John was a shining light;" the exquisite tenor song, "O Zephyr, stirring midst the leaves;" and the final duet for soprano and tenor, "Fairest of Roses." Of the performance on Saturday, under the composer's direction, a few words of general praise may suffice. As Nancy Miss Macintyre and as the Young Squire Mr. Lloyd did full justice to the expressive and beautiful music allotted to them; Miss Hilda Wilson made due effect as Old Margaret; while as Robert Mr. Plunket Greene's obviously good intentions were marred to some extent by serious indisposition, for which, indeed, it would have been wiser to make public apology. The chorus was nearly, the band entirely, satisfactory.

MESSRS. SCHONBERGER AND HEINRICH.

Messrs. Schönberger and Heinrich brought their present series of recitals to a close on Tuesday last, on which occasion the programme was drawn from the songs and pianoforte compositions of Brahms. The Sonata in C, an "Op. 1" almost as extraordinary as that of Mr. Frederic Cliffe, was magnificently played, its boldness not less than its poetic charm being perfectly realised. Mr. Schönberger also played, with consummate mastery of technique and expression, the capriccios in F sharp minor and B minor, and two of the Hungarian Dances. The songs included five from the "Fünf Lieder," Op. 105, and seven from the "Romanzen aus L. Tieck's Magelone." More than dramatic, many of Brahms' songs are terrible in their intensity of passion; but all their demands were met by Mr. Heinrich, who declaimed them with the greatest power and dignity. Adequate recognition should be made of the superb accompaniments of Mr. Schönberger, for it is rare that a player of his calibre cares to take a part generally considered subordinate, even to so accomplished a singer as Mr. Heinrich. But with the songs of such writers as Schubert, Schumann, and Brahms, the accompaniments are so integral a part of the whole, that the interpreters need to be evenly matched. That they have been in the series of concerts thus closed, has contributed not a little to their artistic success.

MISS AGNES BARTLETT'S RECITALS.

At the Hampstead Conservatoire Hall on Saturday last Miss Bartlett completed her series of four historical pianoforte recitals. The lady was said to be indisposed, but she nevertheless went through the programme very successfully. Mendelssohn was represented by five excerpts from that master's works, including the Prelude and Fugue in E minor; Schumann by the "Carneval," and Liszt by the "Benediction de Dieu dans la Solitude," "Waldestrauchen," and two "Studies after Paganini." Of all these exacting pieces Miss Bartlett gave fine renderings. She displayed much "singing" power in the melodies, exquisite lightness in Mendelssohn's Scherzo, and in the Liszt pieces the dexterity of a genuine virtuoso.

LYRIC CLUB.

The newly-formed Lyric Club Orchestral Society gave an admirable concert at the *soirée* of the 12th inst. Though rather small, the orchestra, which is conducted by Mr. Randegger and led by Mr. Pollitzer, is of excellent quality, and comprises some of the best-known members of our leading amateur orchestral societies. Its efficiency reflects much credit on the Hon. Sec., Mr. Frank Butler. The programme included Mackenzie's "Benedictus," the Bach-Gounod "Ave Maria," sung by Miss Florence Bethell, with violin obligato by Mr. Pollitzer, Gounod's Ballet Music to "Faust," and Berlioz' "Marche Hongroise." Miss Bethell and Messrs. C. M. J. Edwards and Frank H. Morton, all from Australia, were the vocalists. The audience was as numerous and fashionable as usual.

THE BACH CHOIR.

This admirable society gave a private concert on Wednesday at Prince's Hall, and though, under the circumstances, criticism is uncalled for, it cannot be unprofitable to place on record the details of a programme, which on the score of variety at least, left little to be desired. It may be mentioned, *en passant*, that the sublime genius from whom this choir derives its name was not represented, all the works performed being selected either from his predecessors or successors. Thus we had Sweelinck's setting of Psalms LXXV. and CXXXIV., the second of which is based on the melody known to us as the "Old Hundredth;" the Christmas carol "Gebor'n ist der Emanuel," by M. Prætorius; Palestrina's magnificent Motet (in six parts) "Assumpta est Maria;" and Dowland's Part Song, "His Golden Locks," to exemplify the art of the Sixteenth and early Seventeenth Century—that of the Nineteenth being represented by De Pearsall's remarkable Part Song (in ten parts) "Sir Patrick Spens," Brahms' "Vineta" and the Madrigal by Mr. Charles Wood, "Slow, slow fresh fount," for which the Madrigal Society in 1888 awarded the Molineux Prize and their own medal. All these works were conducted by Professor C. Villiers Stanford and rendered by the ladies and gentlemen whom he so successfully trains in a manner which left untarnished their great reputation for excellence. Agreeable relief was afforded by Messrs. Richard Gompertz and Marmaduke Barton, who performed together a (MS.) Sonata for violin and piano by Dr. Parry (which must be heard again before we can accept it as representative of its composer's ripened powers), Mr. Gompertz afterwards playing a Romance by Joachim and a piece by Kiel with much skill and taste, and Mr. Barton giving proof of his talent by an intelligent reading of Schumann's "Papillons." There was a large audience.

HYDE PARK ACADEMY OF MUSIC.

The Hyde Park Academy of Music gave the third Subscription Concert on Thursday evening, December 12, at Steinway Hall. The choir of ladies was in excellent form, and under Mr. H. F. Frost's baton gave readings distinguished by unanimity of expression and precision of attack. Professor Stanford's Chorus of Sea Fairies from the "Voyage of Maeldune" was particularly well rendered, and in a Chorus by Thorne, an Anthem by Gounod, and part songs by Smart and Leslie, much delicacy in crescendo and *rubato* effects being observable throughout. As a solo soprano Miss Mary Willis was singularly successful in Rossini's florid and exacting scena "Della rosa il bel vermiglio." This lady should have a brilliant future before her. Miss Ethel Wylde, Miss E. Day, Miss J. Tatham, and Miss E. Buckle were quite equal to the songs and duets for which they were announced, but the violinists scarcely did themselves justice, their intonation, probably through nervousness, being so palpably uncertain. A very young lady played a piano solo, Weber's "Moto Continuo," in a very creditable manner, and in response to an encore gave a good though rather tame version of Chopin's Valse in E minor.

MESSRS. HANN'S CHAMBER CONCERTS.

The novelty at the third and last of these excellent and interesting concerts on Wednesday, the 18th, was a piano and violin sonata (MS) in F major by Mr. Erskine Allon. It would be anticipated by those who know many of Mr. Allon's other works that his sonata would exhibit melody of a distinctly English type, and a certain *penchant* for dance rhythms; and these expectations would be well founded. It is a well written and pleasing work, with agreeable, if not powerful themes, and with some showy passages for the violin in the coda of the finale. Well-trained amateurs would probably find it suitable to their purposes. It was carefully played by Mr. Lewis Hann (violin) and Mr. Sidney Hann (piano). Mr. Wm. C. Hann, the 'cellist of the party, was more successful in a romance by H. Hofmann than in a clap-trap piece by Popper, which however was encored, whereupon he played another piece even more clap-trappy than the former. The concerted pieces were Mozart's well-known Quartett in C, one of the earliest pieces of classical chamber music, and Brahms' noble piano Quintett in F minor. Unfortunately we cannot say that the rendering of either of these pieces quite reaches the high-water mark of Messrs. Hanns' performances. Mrs. Helen Trust was the vocalist, and introduced a very pretty song, "La Fiancée du Soldat" by Mlle. Cécile Chaminade, a French lady whose compositions are beginning to attract notice; in response to a demand for a

encore, she sang another French song apparently by the same composer, and later on gave two songs of Kjerulf, plus Brahms' pretty Lullaby. It is satisfactory to note that these concerts are well supported, and we congratulate the people of Brixton on being so well catered for. The renewal of the concerts will be most welcome.

ST. JAMES'S HALL (BANQUETING ROOM).

On Wednesday evening Miss Margaret Jenkins and Miss Emily Dixon gave a concert in the Banqueting Room of St. James's Hall, in which the first mentioned lady made a very favourable impression by her refined playing of the A flat Ballade for Piano by Chopin, and "Les Vagues" by Moskowski. With regard to Miss Emily Dixon's performances on the Harp we can only say that the lady raised agreeable anticipations in respect of execution and expression at the commencement of her first piece, "La danse des Fées," but the breakage of a string so disconcerted her that her subsequent efforts were somewhat marred. The vocal items were in the hands of Miss Lucie Johnstone, a fine contralto with an excellent expressive style; Miss Julia Jones, a good soprano; Miss Clara Palmer; Mr. Douglas Powell, the possessor of a fine full voice and an excellent method; and Mr. Pugh Evans. Mr. John Thomas, it should be added, joined Miss Dixon in the performance of his own harp Duet in E flat minor—with what success may be imagined. The concert was well attended by a very friendly audience.

PROVINCIAL.

LEEDS, DEC. 16.—The second subscription concert was given on Wednesday last, its chief attraction being a fine performance (for the second time at these concerts) of Schubert's great Octet. The artists who took part in it were Messrs. Ludwig, E. H. Betjemann, Gibson, Howell, Reynolds, Clinton, Wotton, and Paersch, who one and all proved their fitness for the task, though the exceptionally fine horn and clarinet playing of Messrs. Paersch and Clinton entitles them to special mention. Beethoven's string Quartet in A (Op. 18, No. 5) opened the concert, and a curious and interesting trio for violin, violoncello, and double bass by Handel (No. 5, in G minor) ended it. Mr. Ludwig played Tartini's well-known "Trille du Diable," and a pleasing variety was afforded by Miss Douilly's highly artistic singing, more especially in songs of the modern French school. At a concert given in the Town Hall on Tuesday by Mr. H. Dawson Mdlle. Ghetà Corri appeared, and in Rossini's "Bel raggio" and Handel's "Ombra mai fu" evinced much promise as a vocalist. The pianoforte and organ solos of Mr. Dawson, who is a pupil of Dr. Spark, were played with considerable facility and distinction of style.

BRADFORD, 16TH DEC.—On Friday last Benoit's "Lucifer" was given, for the first time in the north of England, at the third of the Bradford Subscription Concerts. The impression made upon us by the Flemish composer's music was not a favourable one, and we doubt whether we have ever heard so pretentious a composition with so little in it. The composer's ideas are few and far between, are seldom remarkable for beauty, and still less for originality. When he does get hold of an idea he never attempts to develop it, but seems quite satisfied with repeating it, frequently *ad nauseam*. That a composer who is so innocent of contrapuntal device should pose as the regenerator of the Flemish school of composition seems to us rather incongruous. M. Benoit was present, and appeared well satisfied with the performance of his work, which was conducted by Sir Charles Hallé, the principal vocalists being M. Blauwert, Miss Annie Marriott, Mdlle. Patey, Messrs. Iver McKay and Bantock Pierpoint, of whom the first and last-named especially distinguished themselves. The chorus, which was that of the Bradford Festival Choral Society, did its work fairly well, but several slips betrayed a want of familiarity with the work. The orchestration, which appeared to us to be by far the finest feature of the work, was admirably rendered by Sir Charles Hallé's fine band.

MANCHESTER.—Dr. Hubert Parry's setting of Pope's "Ode on St. Cecilia's Day" was given at the second concert of the Vocal Society, on the 11th inst. In the absence of an orchestra, the opening prelude and final symphony were omitted, but even under these disadvantages the "Ode" made a great impression, and it is to be hoped that Sir Charles Hallé will favour us with an early opportunity of hearing this noble work in its complete form. Among the most noteworthy pieces sung for the first time was "Make a joyful noise," by John Wrigley, F.R.A.M., a well-known and highly-esteemed local musician. This work is a setting of the

Hundredth Psalm, for chorus, quartett (in canonic form), chorus, solo, and final fugue. Dr. Watson has added to the enjoyment of these concerts by the analytical remarks which he has attached to the principal items, another commendable departure being the date of birth, &c., appended to each composer's name. M. Blauwaert, the Belgian vocalist, made his first appearance at Sir Charles Hallé's seventh concert on the 12th inst. His splendid voice, impassioned style, and strikingly original selection of pieces combined to ensure an unequivocal success. His songs were Gevaert's "Scène Dramatique" from "Philippe d'Artevelde," Bach's Air from "Défi de Phébus et de Pan," Hubert's "Chanson de Mai," and a German version of two Scotch songs arranged by Beethoven. Mr. Willy Hess, as solo violinist, chose Max Bruch's Concerto in G minor, and Bach's Chaconne in D minor. The difficulties of this most ambitious selection, were surmounted in faultless style, whilst expression and conception left nothing to be desired. Sir Charles is to be congratulated on possessing such a leader for his orchestra. The principal orchestral items were Mozart's "Frague" Symphony (without minuet) in D, and Massenet's Suite entitled "Scènes Napolitaines." This latter work, given here for the first time, has been rarely heard in England. It consists of three characteristic movements ("La Danse," "La Procession et L'improvisateur," and "La Fête"), and served admirably to exhibit the brilliancy of the orchestra.

MUSIC IN SCANDINAVIA.

(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.)

COPENHAGEN, DEC. 7, 1889.

The musical worlds in the three Scandinavian capitals have been rather busy of late, and are likely to become still more so, as a good many concerts have been announced. So far they have in a manner been entertaining each other. Grieg has not only delighted his own countrymen in Christiania, but has also treated Copenhagen to a concert *en route*. Fröken Gina Oselio is appearing as guest at the Rozoe Opera, Stockholm; Fru Agathe Backer-Grøndahl has assisted at a concert at Copenhagen, and Norway has also sent a new tenor to Copenhagen. Fröken Ellen Nordgren, from Stockholm, has sung at a couple of concerts at Copenhagen, and from the latter town Herr Neruda has been giving a concert at Stockholm, and the well-known conductor, Herr Balduin Dahl has just returned to Denmark from Christiania with his capital band. So far no great Continental star has, however, visited Scandinavia this winter.

Nor has there, indeed, been any need. At least some of the names I have mentioned are already well known and much appreciated in the "great" cities, although they will, no doubt, become so more and more—and the old rule about prophets does, luckily, does not apply to the leading musicians and singers in Denmark, Norway, and Sweden, although it, perhaps, rather does to those who hold a less unassailable position. Having previously conducted his new work, "Olaf Trygvason," both at Christiania and at a concert in the "Concert-forening," Copenhagen. Grieg gave a most successful "Grieg" concert at Copenhagen, under the auspices of Mr. Wilh. Hannsen, this being the first time the smaller hall in the new "concert palace" was used. It is needless to say that the room was crowded, and the audience very enthusiastic. The programme consisted almost exclusively of Grieg's more recent compositions, and comprised even a couple of songs, which were sung as manuscript, but which have since been published as Op. 48. Assisted by the able violinist, Herr Hilmer, Grieg played with much effect his spirited Sonata (Op. 45, C moll for piano and violin); afterwards he played his Holberg suite (Op. 40), written at the occasion of the Holberg Jubilee five years ago. This composition is so unlike most of Grieg's, that it possesses considerable interest, much enhanced of course by its intrinsic musical value and its quaint, historically correct style. Grieg brought his solo play to a close with half a dozen *morceaux lyriques* (Op. 43), which assuredly deserve to be more known and played than I believe they are. As to which should have the preference will always be a matter of individual taste, but "Ensom Vandrer" (The Lonely Wanderer) and "Hjemmet" (In the Home) deserve perhaps special notice on account of their feeling and descriptive qualities, but they were all charming little pictures within a modest frame. The vocal portion of the concert consisted of a number of Grieg romances sung by Fröken Ellen Nordgren, who had the advantage of the composer's own accompaniment. Fröken Nordgren possesses a really great voice full of substance and volume, and sings mostly with both understanding and

feeling, although her voice has probably not yet reached its zenith. Fröken Nordgren's talent is undoubtedly an elastic one, and of course one cannot very well form much of a definite idea of it after only having heard a few songs, but I am inclined to think that she will probably achieve greater successes as a dramatic than as a concert singer. At this concert she sang the well-known but always welcome "From Monte Pincio" capitolly; Solveig's "Cradle Song," from Per Gynt, perhaps did not suit her so well. Besides two or three merry songs, to words by Drachmann, she sang three quite new songs to German words, dedicated to her, of which perhaps "Ein Traum" was the most taking. Finally Fröken Nordgren simply dashed off Björnson's song "Tak for Dit Rad."

Fröken Nordgren, a few evenings after, gave a concert herself, and although she was a little indisposed she sang a number of songs, comprising a couple of large operatic songs, which suited her very well indeed.

At the first Philharmonic Concert at Copenhagen a young Danish lady, Fröken Friede Schytte, made her *début* as a violinist, a *début* which was attended with quite unusual success. Although Fröken Schytte acquitted herself in very good style in Wieniawski's difficult Concert No. 2, and she also played with much expression Thorne's Andante Religioso, and finally one of Brahms' Hungarian Dances. If Fröken Schytte's horoscope should be cast after her first public appearance, one would predict her a most promising future. Fru Agathe Backer-Grøndahl played in Schumann's A Moll Concert, and Chopin's F Moll Fantasie in her usual exquisite style, and the audience were so enthusiastic in their applause that Fru Backer-Grøndahl also gave them Schumann's "Nachtstück." The programme's most important portion was, however, perhaps, fragments of Wagner's "Parsifal," and "Der Ring des Nibelungen," as this marks a new departure in these concerts. As to its success, opinion is divided, as Wagner in a concert hall, and pulled to pieces, however well played, always must be a very different thing from Wagner in his proper and natural place—the theatre.

At the Copenhagen Musik-forening's last concert a new composition of Professor Gade was produced, viz.: "Der Strom," to words by Goethe (fragment of his "Mahomet"), for three male and two female voices, and chorus. The words are about a brook and its course from the mountain to the ocean, ever increasing in volume, as does the music; after the instrumental introduction one tenor begins the vocal part, then two, and then two more voices, and finally a chorus. It is needless to say that Professor Gade has been fully equal to the task entailed by the words, and the old maestro was loudly applauded.

At the Royal Opera, Stockholm, Fröken Gina Oselio has appeared as Margareta in "Mephistopheles," and Elisabet in "Tannhäuser." The papers are loud in their praises, and Fröken Oselio has sung for enthusiastic audiences. Her Margareta especially is looked upon as a performance of the highest rank.

MUSIC IN AMERICA.

NEW YORK, DEC. 4.

The great fashionable event of the season has taken place—the season of opera in German has opened at the Metropolitan Opera House. The night was worthy to parallel any experienced by Noah and his menagerie during the height of the Deluge, but the audience was an immense one, every seat being sold in advance, and the millionaires of the city displaying their diamonds in dazzling brilliancy. The opera was Wagner's "Flying Dutchman," introducing a number of singers new to our public. Interest chiefly centred around Herr Reichmann, the baritone who, as the Dutchman, was favourably received. Frau Wiesner was accepted calmly as Senta, and a new young contralto, Charlotte Hulm, did fairly well. The new chorus proved to be excellent. The orchestra was hidden out of view, as at Bayreuth, the conductor, Seidl, alone towering up in full view.

On the 29th the "Queen of Sheba," by Goldmark, was produced, with Lilé Lehmann as the Queen. The lady is a great favourite, and received a splendid welcome.

The operas already announced are "Don Giovanni" and "Il Trovatore," and Verdi's "Ballo." Wagner is not to predominate this season as hitherto, though when Vogl arrives the Bayreuth composer will be in the ascendant.

Chamber music is moderately cultivated in New York, the performers being local musicians of the better class. The Carri Brothers, violinist and pianist, give a series of concerts each season, assisted by other local artists. A few weeks ago Hermann Carri, the pianist, was on the ocean returning from Europe he fell on the steamer and so severely sprained his

arm that he was unable to play at the opening concert this week, Max Liebling taking his place. To the Carri we are indebted for much new music which otherwise we would not hear.

The Philharmonic Club have given a concert at which they played a dreary trio by Brahms (Op. 101), and a very quaint trio for a violin and two flutes by J. S. Bach, the performers in this latter work being Richard Arnold, violinist; Mr. Weiner, our leading flutist, and Miss May Smith, a charming young lady, second flute. Ladies here play the banjo, zither, harp, and violin, all of which are fashionable instruments; but few of them attempt the flute. One young lady, Miss Bessie Mecklem, is making a success at concerts as a saxophone soloist to her father's accompaniment upon the harp—quite a novel and effective combination. And, talking about harpists, I may add that Blamphin, the harpist so well known in England, has arrived here for the season; and that Madame Maretzek has been engaged by Mr. Abbey as harpist for the Patti-Tamagno Italian Opera Company. Many years ago Mme. Maretzek—then Mdle. Bertucea—came here with an Italian Opera troupe, and in leading soprano parts made a success on the lyric stage. Max Maretzek waved the baton, and Mdle. Bertucea did not return to Europe, preferring to remain here as the wife of the handsome young conductor. Now she is a renowned harpist, and her husband, besides teaching music, is writing for the press a series of lyric reminiscences. He has had as much experience with opera singers as Mr. Mapleson, and doubtless can write as funny and entertaining a book about the idiosyncracies of the great operatic artists of the past thirty years as the London manager did.

The Abbey and Grau firm have issued an official programme of their plans for the coming opera season, and present a splendid list of artists. Patti has a whole line of big type to herself, and then come the names of Albani, Nordica, and Valda. The contraltos are Abbri and Synnerberg both unknown here. The tenors are Tamagno, Ravelli, and Perugini; while the baritones and basses include Del Puente, Novara Castelmari, and a number of new names. The new chorus of seventy have arrived. The orchestra will be under Arditi and Sapio, and there will be a ballet. The company opens in December at the Chicago Auditorium, then travels through the Far West, even so far as California, appearing in New York at the close of the German season in March next. In this city Patti and Tamagno will not sing together, but as they are each considered an extra attraction the price of stalls on all occasions will be seven dollars. It is expected that Albani and Tamagno will sing together in "Otello," that Tamagno will be heard in "Tell," and that Perugini and Patti will bill and coo together as Romeo and Juliet. A cable despatch to the New York press recently stated that Patti's voice at the late Albert Hall concerts gave signs of wear. There is great curiosity to hear her again; and still greater curiosity to hear Tamagno, whose successes abroad have been amply dilated upon by the local papers. Up to the close of this week the sale of advance tickets for the Chicago season had amounted to about 115,000dols.

Sarasate and D'Albert will not close their stay with a third concert as originally announced, but will give two more, and then go to Baltimore. Otto Hegner is doing well on his provincial tour.

Adele Strauss, a mezzo-soprano of a Jewish family, has made her *début* in a concert at which she sang an air from Mozart's "Titus," with clarinet obligato, a scena by Glutch and German *lieder*—rather unusual selections, and therefore of novelty. She has a noble voice, good style, and facile execution, and will be heard of in the future. Mdle. Utassi, a Hungarian pianist, has given a pianoforte recital of the most uncompromisingly classical music, which she rendered with vigour and skill.

The "Messiah" will be sung by the Oratorio Society during Christmas-tide, under the baton of Walter Damrosch. It will also be given in most of the leading cities and many of the smaller towns throughout the United States.

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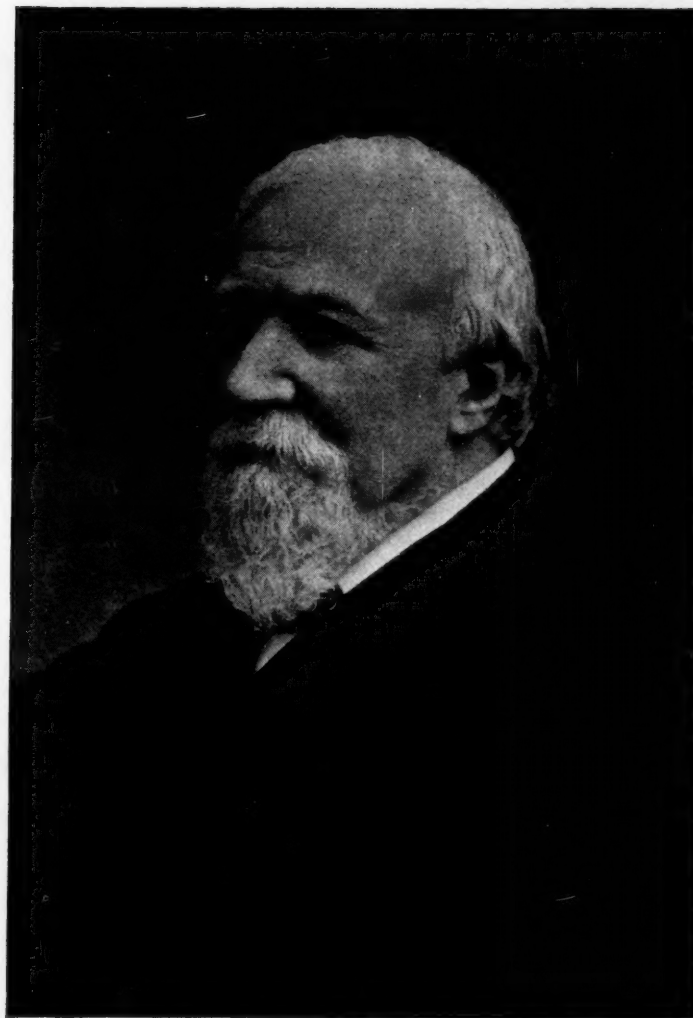
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